

ORIENTAL BIRD CLUB



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The **ORIENTAL BIRD CLUB** aims to:

- * encourage an interest in the birds of the Oriental region and their conservation.
- * liaise with and promote the work of existing regional societies.
- * collate and publish material on Oriental birds.

Two bulletins and a journal, *Forktail*, are published annually.



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Membership of OBC

Membership of the Club is open to all and costs £12 per annum (£8 reduced rate for nationals living in Oriental countries), and £20 for corporate members (organisations, libraries and universities). Special arrangements for payment in USA, Thailand and India. To join or for further details please contact the Membership Secretary, OBC, c/o The Lodge, Sandy, Bedfordshire, SG19 2LD, UK.

Cover illustration: Great Hornbills *Buceros bicornis* and Giant Squirrels *Ratafa* sp. at Thekkadi, Kerala, India by David Swithenbank. The original artwork is available through postal auction. All correspondence should be addressed to OBC Bulletin Editor at c/o The Lodge, Sandy, Bedfordshire, SG19 2DL, U.K.

Club News



Grand Prize Draw for 1992

Enclosed with this bulletin is a book of raffle tickets for the 1992 OBC Grand Prize Draw. Every member's contribution is very important and will help support the OBC conservation work in the Orient.

There are some excellent prizes once again for this draw, and all have been generously donated, and the Club is extremely grateful for this support. The top two prizes are a pair of Leica 10 x 42 binoculars donated by Leica and a £250 travel voucher donated by WildWings Travel.

Buy and sell some tickets TODAY !

1992 AGM in London

The eighth Annual General Meeting of the Oriental Bird Club will be held at the Zoological meeting rooms at Regent's Park in London on Saturday 12 December from 11.00hrs - 17.00hrs. Full details are enclosed with this bulletin. Everyone is welcome and there will be plenty of time to meet other members, as well as listen to the programme of talks.

OBC benefits from ICBP- In Focus County Bird Race

The winners of this year's ICBP - In Focus County Bird Race not only achieved a new British county record of 159 species in 24 hours, but also very kindly agreed to donate their prize money of £300 to the OBC. We are very grateful to the winning team of Dick Filby, Mark Golley, Rod McCann and Bill Oddie for selecting the OBC as the charity of their choice and also thank the book publishers, Harper Collins, for providing financial support.

T-Shirts

Sales of the two new designs have been very encouraging, while last year's Blue Pitta T-shirt continues to be popular. For the OBC, T-shirt sales represent an important source of funding for the Conservation Fund. Members can feel assured that for every T-shirt purchased over half the sale price is profit directed to supporting the club's conservation efforts. At present, stocks of the three designs are still available and we hope

all our members will be proudly wearing these colourful T-shirts.

OBC links with In Focus

Following the successful partnerships with Bird and Wildlife Bookshop (see advert on p. 55) and WildWings Travel, the OBC is pleased to announce a special arrangement with In Focus. The enclosed In Focus "Equipment Guide" to binoculars and telescopes is provided free of charge to members and is essential reading for anyone considering the purchase of new optics. In return In Focus have agreed to donate 10% to the Conservation Fund on any purchases made by OBC members at list price. To ensure the success of this scheme, it is important that members identify themselves as OBC members when purchasing optics from In Focus.

The extensive range of optics available from In Focus can be seen at their shops in Barnet (Herts) and Titchwell (Norfolk), as well as their frequent field events at many RSPB, WWT and Wildlife Trusts' reserves (see advert on p.56).

Naturally, for the Conservation Fund to benefit from this arrangement, we need your cooperation. Your support for this scheme will personally cost you nothing, but will contribute significantly to conservation in the Oriental region.

OBC welcomes its third corporate sponsor

ORNITHOLIDAYS have made a generous donation of £500 to the OBC Conservation Fund. The money will be used to fund a specific project, most probably in the Indian Subcontinent, an area that Ornitholidays regularly visit. Nigel Jones of Ornitholidays reports that they have been supporting a number of conservation projects around the world from their own conservation fund, and are delighted to be involved with the OBC.

Ornitholidays are now our third corporate sponsor, and the first bird tour company to support the scheme. Not only will Ornitholidays be entitled to use the *Forktail* logo in their promotional literature, but will also benefit from free full page advertising in the bulletin (see advert on p. 54).

Advertising with the OBC

With a growing worldwide membership coupled with an attractive Bulletin, the OBC is now actively seeking advertisers for the Bulletin. To provide prospective advertisers with details on advertising in the Bulletin (plus the OBC Corporate Sponsorship Scheme) a special leaflet titled "Media Information" has been produced. Interested advertisers are encouraged to write to Nick Gardner, OBC Promotions Officer.

Bird and Wildlife Bookshop service

1992 looks as if it will be another good year for donations from Bird and Wildlife Bookshop, arising from book sales to OBC members. The most recent accounts indicate that donations are already close to £500 and with the imminent arrival of some important ornithological publications, we are hoping to at least match last year's figure.

Once again, we ask members to support the OBC Conservation Fund by identifying themselves as OBC members when purchasing books from Bird and Wildlife Bookshop.

Membership renewal forms

Some UK members have unfortunately received green forms asking them to renew their 1992 membership in Indian Rupees payable to our Indian bank account! This has caused some confusion for which apologies are due. There are stocks of different forms for different countries, many of which are green and two piles of renewal forms became mixed up. UK members should continue to send membership renewal forms in Sterling (as enclosed with this bulletin) to our usual address.

Girobank account charges

With regard to the Club's GIRO account number 35 234 1904, Girobank have advised us that they intend to charge the Club £2 per international transfer, with effect from August 1992. This will affect members particularly in Europe and Japan who find this a convenient method of paying for subscriptions and sales.

Despite vigorous protests, the charge remains and, unfortunately, Council do not believe that it can be absorbed.

It would be greatly appreciated if members using the GIRO account for subscription payments from outside the UK could add £2 to each

payment. Where possible, please take advantage of the Club's offer to accept 2-years or 3-years subscriptions together.

Standing Orders and Direct Debits

Following the increase in subscriptions on 1 January 1992 and subsequent changes to many Standing Orders, members have enquired why we do not use Variable Direct Debits (D/Ds).

Standing Orders are sent by the Club to your bank, who then pay your fixed subscription annually until it is revoked or amended. The bank do all the work. On the other hand, Direct Debits can be processed only with computer software to generate a BACS (Bankers' Automated Clearing Services) tape. Naturally, there is a charge for this service, and other processing costs, and the OBC Council does not currently wish to spend monies on computers and software to process D/Ds, when communication with members and conservation grants should take priority.

OBC Manchester Meeting

The Club's fourth summer meeting in Manchester was held on 4 July, at a new venue outside the city centre. In spite of poor weather many members attended, and we were not disappointed.

Frank Lambert gave a fascinating and well-illustrated talk on the effects of selective logging on bird communities in South-East Asia. With revealing slides and great clarity Frank described the process of logging and explained how, with a little care, the risks to forest birds can be reduced. Although the fate of the forests appears to be in the hands of politicians and loggers, Frank conveyed some optimism for the future.

Stephanie Tyler talked enthusiastically about her preliminary studies of Himalayan riverbird communities in Nepal, which hold the richest diversity of riverbirds in the world. Stephanie described her project in a refreshingly uncomplicated manner which held everyone's attention.

The afternoon was concluded by Carol and Tim Inskipp who spoke of their recent visit to Bhutan, which remains one of the least known parts of the Oriental region. Illustrated with their own slides, Carol and Tim gave us a splendid introduction to this spectacular land and its birds. Perhaps the most startling revelation for us all was how much forest there still is in Bhutan, when so much has been destroyed elsewhere in the Himalayas.

Nigel Redman

OBC Blakeney Meeting

The conditions were perfect for the annual August Bank Holiday meeting at Blakeney - an impressive programme of talks, a superb venue close to some excellent birding localities and a classic weekend for birds. In fact, almost 200 people came to the event making it the best attended OBC meeting ever.

There were plenty of stalls selling books, sound recordings, paintings and OBC T-shirts, and Daryl Gardner did an excellent job making sure that no-one escaped without buying some raffle tickets, raising over £200 for the Conservation Fund. Phil Round, OBC's Thailand rep., brought an incredible video of Gurney's Pitta *Pitta gurneyi*, and other wildlife filmed at Khao-Pra Bang Khram. Those who arrived early enough were able to experience genuine Malaysian food for lunch prepared by Eng Li and Paul Green. OBC gratefully thank Eng Li and Paul, who donated all profits to the OBC Conservation Fund.

Peter Davison and Tony Stones began the afternoon's talks relating the results of a recent expedition to Taliabu in Indonesia. This was followed by

a humorous and illuminating account of Korea and its birds, with much emphasis on the politics and the problems of conservation. A surprise addition to the programme were Pete Morris and Seb Buckton who showed some remarkable slides of forest birds taken in Sabah, peninsular Malaysia and Thailand. The final talk of the afternoon was by Crawford Prentice who spoke about the programme of trapping migrants at night on Fraser's Hill, Malaysia (see pp. 21-25).

This was an excellent meeting and many thanks go to the organizers, Dick Filby and Sarah Dalziel.
Nigel Redman

Thanks to ICBP

Once again the Club would like to thank ICBP for the use of their facilities in the production of this bulletin.

Bulletin 16

The Editorial Committee warmly thank Rob Innes for his help in the production of this bulletin. Rob's help has been instrumental in keeping bulletin production costs to a minimum.

AMERICAN ORNITHOLOGISTS' UNION MEMBERSHIP INVITATION



Publications Available Through Membership

The Auk, a quarterly journal

Supplements that summarize bird literature

Ornithological Newsletter

Regular Member, @ \$35.00

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SEND DUES PAYMENT TO:

Ornithological Societies of North America

P.O. Box 1897

Lawrence, KS 66044-8897 USA





Conservation Fund

Compiled by OBC Conservation Officer, Carol Inskipp

Fourth Forktail Leica Award

The winner of the Fourth *Forktail Leica Award* will be announced at the Club's AGM in December

Survey Grants - applications welcome

Once again the Club is pleased to announce grants for conservation work, all of which this time have been given to Oriental nationals. Applications are welcomed at any time of the year, but please do apply a few months in advance of your study, as decisions are taken at OBC Council meetings which are held about four times a year. To apply or discuss the planned work please contact the Conservation Officer, Carol Inskipp.

Study of Storm's Stork in South Sumatra, Indonesia

An award of £282 (\$525) has been given to Riza Kadarisman to raise local peoples' awareness of the globally endangered Storm's Stork *Ciconia stormi* and the value of the species's mangrove habitat in supporting sustainable development. Riza has been studying the species since 1989 and the grant also enabled him to collect more data on its habitat and behaviour in August and September.

Avifaunal survey of Maduganga Estuary, Sri Lanka

Mahendra Siriwardena has been awarded £300 (\$558) to investigate the bird species composition, abundance and distribution the Maduganga Estuary and its 75 islands, in Sri Lanka. It is hoped that the survey will provide justification to declare the area a wildlife sanctuary.

Ornithological survey of Desert National Park, India

Harkirat Sangha has been awarded £300 (\$558) to assist his survey of bird species status, distribution and threats in Desert National Park, India, during the period November 1992 to February 1994. The park is currently threatened by overgrazing and the effects of tourism. Harkirat aims to cover all the park's habitats throughout the year. He is requesting records from members who have visited the park to enable him to produce a more comprehensive report (please see p. 49). As a result of his study Harkirat will be making recommendations for future conservation measures to the Rajasthan Forest Department.

Bird survey of Tarutao National Park, Thailand

Members of the Bangkok Bird Club have been awarded £300 to part fund their ornithological survey of Tarutao National Park, Satoon Province in Thailand in November 1992. Tarutao comprises over 50 forested islands in the Andaman Sea. Apart from a preliminary investigation by the Club members earlier this year, there have been no other bird surveys of the park. Species so far recorded include Great-billed Heron *Ardea sumatrana* and Masked Finfoot *Heliopais personata*. The Bangkok Bird Club team will compile a bird checklist which they hope will be published in 1993.

Avifaunal survey of the Annaivilundawa tanks, Sri Lanka

A grant of £300 will assist Thilo Hoffmann, Upali Ekanayake and Deepal Warakagoda to carry out a comprehensive bird survey and make a detailed description of the Annaivilundawa tanks in Puttalam District, Sri Lanka over a full year period from November 1992. These five manmade reservoirs form one of the top ten freshwater bird habitats in Sri Lanka. The team aims to establish beyond doubt the great importance of this wetland system and so to make a strong case for the protection of the area.

CONSERVATION FUND IN ACTION

Forktail Leica Award Winner 1989

After unavoidable delays in 1990 and 1991, Dr René Dekker, in his capacity as Curator of Birds at the National Museum of Natural History - Leiden, The Netherlands, successfully carried out his study of the status and breeding biology of the Nicobar Megapode *Megapodius nicobariensis* in February and March 1992. His visit was at the invitation of the Indian Ministry of Environment and Forests. The islands are closed to foreigners, but were opened up for the first time since 1992 for René's visit to facilitate the conservation of an endangered bird species. The study was financially sponsored by OBC's Forktail Leica Award and the Netherlands Foundation for International Nature Protection.

The Nicobar Megapode is endemic to the Nicobar Islands in the Gulf of Bengal, India. Recent reports suggested that this mound-building megapode was under severe pressure from egg collectors and hunters, that it survives on Great Nicobar in low numbers, and had disappeared from most other islands. René aimed to determine the status of the species on Great Nicobar, advise the Indian Ministry on conservation management and train Indian wildlife conservationists in megapode research and conservation.

The results of his study are very heartening. René estimated that the total megapode population on Great Nicobar exceeds 2,000 birds - a considerably higher figure than previous estimates of 50-400 birds. In contrast to earlier fears, he found that egg-collecting and snaring of adult megapodes were only having a very small negative influence on the species's population. The designation in 1992 of two large areas as National Parks, encompassing 536 km² of primary forest on Great Nicobar will help to secure the future of the Nicobar Megapode. René concluded that there does not seem to be reason for concern that the megapode population on the island is in immediate danger. Introduced predators, notably feral cats, are however of some concern and their removal should be considered. Preventing the introduction of more carnivores, such as cats or civets is recommended. René also recommends the involvement of the few persistent Nicobarese egg-collectors in the conservation of the megapode and the national parks, the clearance of destabilising secondary vegetation from megapode mounds, and the initiation of research activities by wildlife staff and Indian biology (PhD) students. A full account of the results of this study will be published in *Forktail*.

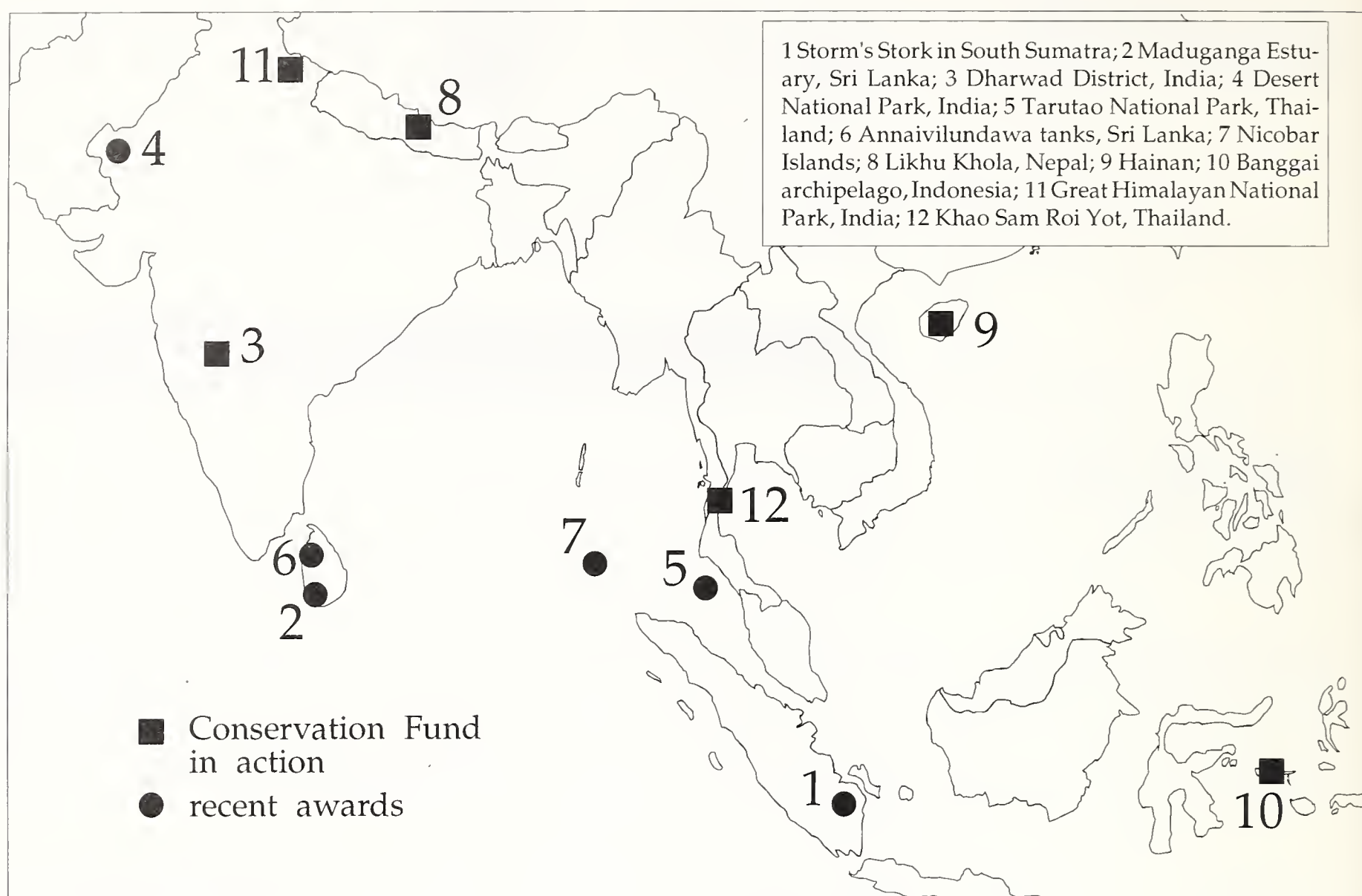


Figure 1. OBC in action in the Orient.

Ecology of River Birds in Nepal

Five weeks were spent in Nepal in November and December 1991, with a further three weeks in March and early April 1992, part-funded by the OBC. During these two study periods, I made a preliminary investigation of the ecology of river birds. Most fieldwork was carried out in the Likhu Khola at 600-700 m in the middle hills, north of Kathmandu, but some observations were made on the Trisuli and Langtang Khola up to 3,750 m, from the Bagmati River above and below the capital (1,200-1,450 m), and from rivers in the lowlands of the Royal Chitwan National Park (150-250 m).

Data were collected on the abundance and distribution in the winter and spring periods of Brown Dipper *Cinclus pallasii*, White-capped Water-Redstart *Chaimarrornis leucocephalus*, Blue Whistling-Thrush *Myiophonus caeruleus*, and several species of kingfisher. The use of the river corridor by these species, their feeding behaviour and diet were also studied. A sample of birds was caught to obtain data on biometrics of some of these species, and any aggressive interactions between species were noted.

A future paper in *Forktail* will present the results of this work, highlighting probable ways in which the many species of river bird are ecologically segregated and the implications of land use changes for river birds. It is suggested that Brown Dippers may be adversely affected on many rivers by siltation and by restricted flows due to the

diversion of water for irrigation. Spotted Forktail *Enicurus maculatus*, Slaty-backed Forktail *E. schistaceus* and Black-backed Forktail *E. immaculatus*, which prefer streams and rivers with bankside trees or riparian vegetation, may be absent or at reduced densities on many denuded water courses in the middle hills. Vegetation is also probably of importance to Plumbeous Water-Redstarts *Rhyacornis fuliginosus*, particularly females and immatures, for cover and food. Dr Steve Ormerod assisted with fieldwork in November and December; he also helped devise the project and, through his involvement in a large ODA-funded programme (looking at the effects of land-use changes on physical, chemical and biological aspects of water courses in the Likhu Khola), enabled ornithological work to be carried out in this part of the middle hills of Nepal.

Stephanie Tyler

Study of breeding biology of a new species of *Phylloscopus* in Hainan, China

An OBC grant of £300 part-funded a survey of Jian Feng Ling Reserve on Hainan in May 1992. The survey showed that an undescribed *Phylloscopus* warbler, which Per Alström and I recently discovered in the area, was fairly common there. The breeding period was coming to an end at the time of our visit and several pairs with full-grown fledglings were seen. One nest was found. They seemed to prefer forest edges and most territories were along roads or near clearings. A formal description of the warbler will be published in *Ibis* in early 1993.

Other species of interest included White-winged Magpie *Urocissa whiteheadi* and, on a previous visit, Hainan Grey Peacock-Pheasant *Polyplectron bicalcaratum katsumatae*, Hainan Partridge *Arborophila ardens* and Ratchet-tailed Treepie *Temnurus temnurus*. According to the warden Grey Peacock-Pheasant is very rare. Ratchet-tailed Treepie and Hainan Partridge are probably not uncommon, but rather secretive. Other observers have reported Blue-rumped Pitta *Pitta soror* from the area and, according to the Chinese literature, there is an old record of White-eared Night-Heron *Gorsachius magnificus*. The reserve seems to be fairly well protected from logging and hunting but, immediately outside the boundaries, we saw ample evidence of both.

Urban Olsson

Status and conservation of the Sula Scrubfowl

An OBC grant funded one member of the Indonesian team (M. Indrawan, M.S. Fujita, Y. Masala and L. Pesik), who studied the Sula Scrubfowl *Megapodius bernsteinii* in the Banggai Archipelago, Sulawesi province, Indonesia between October and December 1991. Extensive surveys were carried out on foot, detailed observations were made from hides and local people were interviewed. The Sula Scrubfowl has previously been classified as globally threatened and, until this expedition, there had been very few records since 1938. Although the team found the species to be widespread over the Banggai Archipelago, it appears to be declining in parts of its range. The survey indicated that the last of the remaining areas of intact rainforests had begun to be cleared by commercial logging. Although the species may be adapted to some extent to degraded forest and other heavily

disturbed habitats, it may not be able to maintain a healthy population outside the closed forests in the long term. Other threats identified were the snaring of adult birds, the presence of monitor lizards *Varanus salvator* which are potential predators, and the introduction of Red Junglefowl *Gallus gallus*, which are believed to have displaced megapodes elsewhere. The team recommend an improvement in the existing laws protecting megapodes on the islands, suggest the designation of small islands in the Archipelago as reserves, and the possible development of hatcheries for optional translocation of birds. They also recommend encouraging the active participation of local people in scrubfowl protection, the production of education material about the scrubfowl for schoolchildren and their teachers, the development of nature tourism, surveys of the scrubfowl in areas which have so far not been covered and further studies of the species's breeding habits.

Re-appraisal of the Great Himalayan National Park, Himachal Pradesh, India

An OBC grant of £330 funded six Indian survey workers who were part of the team who carried out, with us, a re-appraisal of the Great Himalayan National Park in Himachal Pradesh, India. During four major treks undertaken in September and October 1991 wildlife abundance was re-assessed, information on livestock grazing and herb-collecting was obtained, the management plan was reviewed, and recommendations made on future research priorities.

Forested areas within the National Park were found to contain far more wildlife in 1991 than areas outside its boundaries did in 1985, giving the area national or international significance for the conservation of several bird and mammal species, including Western Tragopan *Tragopan melanocephalus*. From surveys of forested habitat at 1,700-3,100 m the uninhabited Tirthan valley yielded three times as many wildlife records as the inhabited Jiwa and Sainj valleys. Pending further research, it therefore seems important for the conservation of forest wildlife that permanent residents of the National Park area are resettled elsewhere as soon as possible. A moratorium on timber-felling within the National Park, imposed in 1984, has been upheld and it appears that the present requirements of local people for wood can be met by forests outside the park. Grazing by domestic livestock is causing significant damage to the forest understorey and may be affecting alpine meadows. Proposed extensions to roads on the western approaches to the National Park will damage habitats and ease access for unauthorised persons, thereby increasing the need for staff at check posts and on patrol.

It is suggested that specialist wildlife treks for small groups, operating under strict guidelines and accompanied by Park staff, could be conducted without significant adverse impact. The setting up of a Research Station within the National Park is recommended, from which long-term programmes could be undertaken, including the monitoring of pheasant species, and the study of the effects of grazing on alpine meadows and their use by wildlife. Effective management of the National Park in future will require the fullest cooperation between the local people and the Himachal Pradesh Department of Forest Farming and Conservation staff. Every effort

needs to be made to provide local people with employment that is concerned with the management of the National Park. The Great Himalayan National Park, together with the adjacent Pin Valley National Park, Rupi Bhaba Wildlife Sanctuary, and the proposed Srikand National Park, forms the largest block of relatively intact wildlife habitat in the Western Himalayas. Together with land being managed in traditional ways nearby, these protected areas are excellent candidates for inclusion in a single large Western Himalayan Biosphere Reserve, and may deserve nomination as a World Heritage Site. A full account of the results of the survey are given in the report *Himachal Wildlife Project - III A Re-appraisal of the Great Himalayan National Park* written by A.J.Gaston and P.J. Garson, July 1992.

Anthony J. Gaston and Peter J. Garson

Biodiversity Survey of Khao Sam Roi Yot

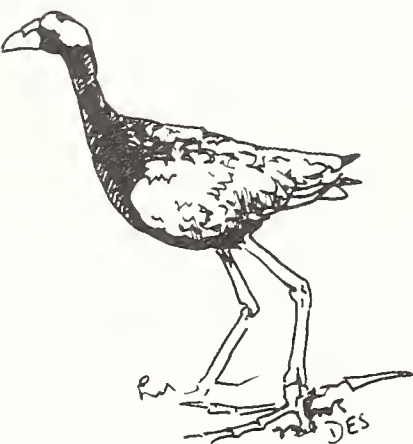
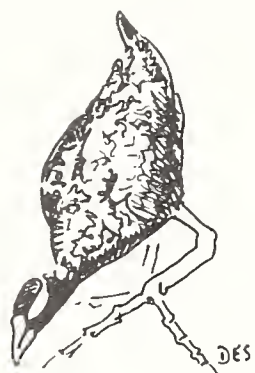
An OBC grant of £500 enabled John Parr to carry out a biodiversity survey of the gravely threatened Khao Sam Roi Yot marsh in 1991. During the last two years John has been active in lobbying both nationally and internationally to secure the future of the marsh. The international importance and threats to the marsh were described in *OBC Bull.*14: 10-11.

John reports that following a visit in July 1991 by high level government officials, the Minister of Agriculture ordered that there would be an inspection of land ownership documents, whereupon illegal encroachers would be requested to leave within three months of his visit. Uncertain that the government would abide by their promises and, because the draining of the marsh was deemed severe, Thai NGOs requested many relevant international conservation organisations to petition the Prime Minister to safeguard the site. The deadline passed without the government's promises being fulfilled. The letters of concern, from virtually all the relevant international conservation organisations, though sent, never reached the attention of the Prime Minister. The Thai conservation organisations could not co-ordinate a concerted front over the marsh, underestimating its conservation value.

By August 1992 prospects for the wetlands at Khao Sam Roi Yot National Park were bleak. Encroachment continues, community support for the park remains low and there is little political resolve to enable management to progress. John recommends that a management plan which aims to integrate ecological management with the needs of the local people is needed to control future management of the park. An article by John Parr describing the ecological importance of the park and the history of hostilities will be published in a future issue of *Oryx*.

Survey of migration sites in north Karnataka, India

OBC fully funded my survey of freshwater tanks artificially created for irrigation in Dharwad District, north Karnataka, India in February and March 1992 (Figure 1). No previous ornithological study had been conducted at Dharwad. A total of 54 tanks throughout the district were studied and detailed data were collected on bird species and numbers, water area, water quality, the extent of aquatic vegetation and phyto- and zoo-plankton present. For each site, information



Bronze-winged Jacanas
Hydrophasianus chirurgus
by David Swithenbank

was also compiled on conservation measures taken and proposed, disturbances and threats, land ownership, land use and the site’s economic and social values.

The study revealed that in many areas along the western flank of Dharwad District the irrigation tanks were of national importance as stop- over sites for migratory waterbirds (Figure 2). In addition, the tanks serve as excellent feeding and breeding grounds for resident birds.

A total of 23 tanks were identified as of potential importance for waterbirds. Bird species recorded included 2,500 Demoiselle Cranes *Grus virgo*, 1,000 Bar-headed Geese *Anser indicus*, the first ever flock of Greater Flamingos *Phoenicopterus ruber* to be found in the district, which totalled 500 birds, and a rare inland record of 35 Pacific Golden Plovers *Pluvialis fulva*.

The main threats to the tanks are the widespread removal of aquatic vegetation for animal fodder, reed-cutting for thatching, continuous cattle grazing, cattle bathing, clothes washing, intensive fishing activities, illegal bird netting and trapping, the wide use of pesticides and fertilisers and, above all, the steady encroachment of land near the tanks for agriculture.

The irrigation tanks are not given the consideration and protection they deserve as habitats for waterfowl. There should be effective management planning for both village communities and wildlife. Comprehensive recommendations for the future conservation of the tanks are made, including the marking and protection of tank boundaries, the introduction of a law to maintain at least 2 ft (0.6 m) of water in the tanks in both summer and winter, the prevention of pollution such as runoff from nearby paddyfields treated with insecticides, the enforcement of laws preventing tree-cutting and agricultural encroachment of areas surrounding the tanks, and the provision of funds for the maintenance of the ecological quality of the tanks.

Bird species recorded at Dharwad District irrigation tanks February - March 1992

Bird species	Number of tanks where recorded	Bird species	Number of tanks where recorded
Lesser Whistling Duck <i>Dendrocygna javanica</i>	5	Black-winged Stilt <i>Himantopus himantopus</i>	23
Bar-headed Goose <i>Anser indicus</i>	6	Pacific Golden Plover <i>Pluvialis fulva</i>	1
Ruddy Shelduck <i>Tadorna ferruginea</i>	7	Little Ringed Plover <i>Charadrius dubius</i>	10
Comb Duck <i>Sarkidiornis melanotos</i>	1	Red-wattled Lapwing <i>Vanellus indicus</i>	11
Cotton Pygmy-Goose <i>Nettapus coromandelianus</i>	6	Small Pratincole <i>Glareola lactea</i>	1
Gadwall <i>Anas strepera</i>	1	River Tern <i>Sterna aurantia</i>	6
Common Teal <i>Anas crecca</i>	3	Black-bellied Tern <i>Sterna acuticauda</i>	2
Spot-billed Duck <i>Anas poecilorhyncha</i>	5	Little Grebe <i>Tachybaptus ruficollis</i>	17
Northern Pintal <i>Anas acuta</i>	17	Oriental Darter <i>Anhinga melanogaster</i>	1
Garganey <i>Anas querquedula</i>	17	Little Cormorant <i>Phalacrocorax niger</i>	8
Northern Shoveler <i>Anas chrypeata</i>	15	Little Egret <i>Egretta garzetta</i>	25
Common Kingfisher <i>Alcedo atthis</i>	13	Grey Heron <i>Ardea cinerea</i>	2
White-throated Kingfisher <i>Halcyon smyrnensis</i>	12	Purple Heron <i>Ardea purpurea</i>	2
Pied Kingfisher <i>Ceryle rudis</i>	9	Intermediate Egret <i>Mesophoyx intermedia</i>	1
Demoiselle Crane <i>Grus virgo</i>	5	Cattle Egret <i>Bubulcus ibis</i>	28
Purple Swampphen <i>Porphyrio porphyrio</i>	4	Indian Pond-Heron <i>Ardeola grayii</i>	22
Common Coot <i>Fulica atra</i>	17	Great Bittern <i>Botaurus stellaris</i>	4
Sandgrouse spp. <i>Pterocles</i> spp.	3	Greater Flamingo <i>Phoenicopterus ruber</i>	2
Black-tailed Godwit <i>Limosa limosa</i>	8	Glossy Ibis <i>Plegadis falcinellus</i>	3
Bar-tailed Godwit <i>Limosa lapponica</i>	2	Black-headed Ibis <i>Threskionris melanocephalus</i>	9
Eurasian Curlew <i>Numenius arquata</i>	5	Red-naped Ibis <i>Pseudibis papillosa</i>	7
Common Redshank <i>Tringa totanus</i>	1	Eurasian Spoonbill <i>Platalea leucorodia</i>	seen occasionally
Common Greenshank <i>Tringa nebularia</i>	3	Painted Stork <i>Mycteria leucocephala</i>	4
Wood Sandpiper <i>Tringa glareola</i>	6	Asian Openbill <i>Anastomus oscitans</i>	3
Common Sandpiper <i>Tringa hypoleucos</i>	24	Woolly-necked Stork <i>Ciconia episcopus</i>	12
Litle Stint <i>Calidris minuta</i>	quite common	White Stork <i>Ciconia ciconia</i>	2
Greater Painted-snipe <i>Rostratula benghalensis</i>	2	Red-rumped Swallow <i>Hirundo daurica</i>	11
Pheasant-tailed Jacana <i>Hydrophasianus chirurgus</i>	3	White Wagtail <i>Motacilla alba</i>	10
Bronze-winged Jacana <i>Metopidius indicus</i>	4		

Dr J.C. Uttangi, 36/1 Mission Compound, Dharwad 580 001, Karnataka, India.



Around the Orient

South-East Asian Wetlands under threat

Reports from around the region this year show that a number of South-East Asian wetlands are threatened by reclamation, and ill-planned developments.

In Thailand, the large freshwater lake of Beung Boraphet, which is 18km by 6km and situated in Nakhon Sawan Province is undergoing a "rehabilitation" programme. The lake has been drained, under the direction of the Fisheries Department and with a loan of US\$ 30 million (220 million baht) from the Japanese Overseas Economic Cooperation Fund. The aim is to eradicate 90 species of waterweed, and the project will also include the construction of an aquarium, a crocodile demonstration farm and a fish breeding centre, and stocking the lake with Siamese Tigerfish *Datnioides microlepis*.

The Lake is the most important site for wintering ducks in Thailand, with yearly maxima of 16,000 Lesser Whistling-Duck *Dendrocygna javanica* and 30,000 Garganey *Anas querquedula*, smaller numbers of Northern Pintail *Anas acuta* (2,500) and Baer's Pochard *Aythya baeri* (maximum 426) and a few Eurasian Wigeon *Anas penelope*, Common Teal *Anas crecca*, Northern Shoveler *Anas clypeata*, Ferruginous Pochard *Aythya nyroca* and Tufted Duck *Aythya fuligula*, amongst others. The wetland is partly within the Beung Boraphet Non-hunting Area and is listed as a site of international value in the IWRB Directory of Asian Wetlands. Some 5,100 fishermen live around the lake, and as many as 1 million people may be dependent upon the resources of the lake's catchment area.

Following an outcry from appalled environmentalists in May 1992, and in view of the deleterious effects that the rehabilitation project is having upon the freshwater ecosystem, the Deputy Agriculture Minister Varothai Phinyasart has ordered closer cooperation between the Fisheries Department, and the Forestry Department who are responsible for conserving the lake. It remains to be seen in what way the rehabilitation programme will be revised to minimise the ecological damage it has and will inflict.

In Indonesia a couple of freshwater wetlands have been threatened with drainage for development. The Muara Angke marshes are a well known

birding site in Java, located by the coast on the road to Jakarta's International Airport. They are an important feeding area for cormorants, egrets and herons that breed nearby on the island of Pulau Rambut, and support large numbers of wintering rails and crakes.

A long-planned waterfront development has recently begun. While it is planned not to encroach on the small Muara Angke reserve or on a 200 m belt of mangrove fringe, it is destroying large area of adjacent wetlands. Throughout September the development generated a great deal of critical comment in the local media, mainly as a result of lobbying by WALHI, an Indonesian environmental non-governmental organisation.

The freshwaters of Lake Tempe, located in south Sulawesi, provide a livelihood for tens of fishing communities along its shoreline and a staging site for large numbers of waterbirds. The lake is especially important for Garganey *Anas querquedula*, with more than 10,000 wintering, Oriental Reed-Warbler *Acrocephalus orientalis* (more than 25,000) and Glossy Ibis *Plegadis falcinellus* (5,000). In 1991, the Public Works Department began a project that will reclaim more than two-thirds of the lake for soybean and maize production. The reclamation has started in the mistaken belief that the lake is silting up and causing a decline in the fisheries. However, studies by AWB have shown that in fact the fisheries are stable and at the current levels of siltation it would take several hundred years for the lake to be filled.

Source: *Asian Wetland News* 4:2, the *Bangkok Post*, and Paul Jepson.

Conservation plan for the White-winged Duck

A conservation plan for the the White-winged Duck *Cairina scutulata* has just been launched by the Wildfowl and Wetlands Trust (WWT). Prepared with assistance from ICBP, Asian Wetland Bureau (AWB) and a network of more than 50 scientists from Asia, the plan assesses the current status of the duck and the actions needed to ensure its survival.

The White-winged Duck is believed to have declined by more than 95% this century. The species survives in remaining areas of forest in India, Bangladesh, Myanmar, Thailand, Viet Nam and Sumatra

but is thought to be extinct in Malaysia and Java and the current status in Laos and Cambodia is unclear. Only 220 individuals are known to survive, scattered in 40 small populations. It is likely that more birds do exist as few areas have been well surveyed and this retiring species is often difficult to locate. However, assuming that future surveys will identify larger or new populations, the total world population is still estimated to be less than 2,500.

Some of the recommendations in the conservation plan are already being implemented. In a joint project between the Thai Royal Forest Department and WWT, systematic surveys of 12 key sites in Thailand are being carried out. In Sumatra, WWT, the IUCN Captive Breeding Specialist Group (CBSG), and AWB are participating in surveys of key sites and are planning a Population and Habitat Viability Analysis (PHVA) workshop. WWT also has a well established captive breeding programme for the duck, with the species on display at four of its eight centres.

The conservation plan, *The status and conservation of the White-winged Wood Duck Cairina scutulata* is an IWRB Special Publication and is available from: The Research and Conservation Department, The Wildfowl and Wetlands Trust, Slimbridge, Gloucestershire, GL2 7BT, UK. The price is £10.00 plus £3.50 postage and packing; cheques payable to "The Wildfowl and Wetlands Trust".

Hornbill workshop held in Thailand

The first international workshop on the conservation of Asian hornbills and their habitats, was held in Bangkok and Khao Yai National Park, Thailand from 6-10 April of this year. The meeting was organised by Hornbill Project Thailand, Mahidol University, under the leadership of Assistant Professor Pilai Poonswad, and was co-hosted by Kasetsart University and the Royal Forestry Department. There were some 45 delegates from 14 countries, all but three of them Asians directly concerned with hornbills and their conservation. The meeting provided a major stimulus to conservation, especially of hornbills in the Oriental region.

The conference opened with a day and a half of talks, introducing the evolution of Asian hornbills, their ecology and breeding biology and techniques for their study in their rain forest habitat. Afterwards, representatives of all countries in the region delivered reports on the status of hornbills and their habitats in their respective countries. Three days were spent at Khao Yai National Park, during which

participants learnt techniques in radio-tracking, hornbill trapping, nest watching and habitat assessment in the rain forests. An action plan was prepared for the conservation of Asian hornbills, including establishing a regional network of workers and experts, setting priorities for field research and planning developments to the next conference.

All delegates were encouraged to deliver finished manuscripts to the conference. They will form part of the "Manual for Conservation of Asian Hornbills and their habitats", which will constitute the proceedings of the conference and form a valuable reference for anyone interested in the study and conservation of Asian hornbills.

Contributed by Alan Kemp.

Major discoveries in Viet Nam

Following the discovery of a new taxon of *Alcippe* in Viet Nam last year (see *OBC. Bull.* 14) comes even more exciting news from this biologically rich but little-known country.

As part of a WWF supported programme in Viet Nam, a team of Vietnamese scientists from the Forest Inventory and Planning Institute, accompanied by Dr John MacKinnon earlier this year visited Vu Quang Nature Reserve in Ha Tinh Province in northern Viet Nam. Preliminary analysis of satellite images and maps suggested that the site warranted investigation but nothing could have prepared the team for what they discovered. On reaching the area the first surprise for the team was that, although the forest type had been indicated as monsoon forest on the maps, it was in fact evergreen forest and, astonishingly, largely intact.

Interviews with local hunters revealed the presence of a hitherto undescribed medium-sized forest bovid. The examination of several skulls with almost Oryx-like rapier horns confirmed the presence of a mammal new to science. Although a formal identification and description of the animal is awaited, the best guess at present is that it is a species of dwarf buffalo, perhaps related to the Anoa *Bubalus depressicornis* and *B. quarlesi*, which are endemic to Sulawesi in Indonesia.

Viet Nam has suffered from massive deforestation and has almost no remaining primary forests. It is therefore all the more remarkable that the discovery of such a large area of pristine evergreen forest in one of the country's most densely populated provinces should only now have been made. Following these outstanding discoveries it is to be hoped that the government will increase its efforts to conserve this unique area.

Contributed by Jonathan Eames.

Dam project flawed but World Bank fails to act

The Sardar Sarovar Dam is one of more than 3,000 dams that are planned for the Narmada River in central India, encompassing the states of Madhya Pradesh, Maharashtra and Gujarat. The construction of these dams will destroy 900 km² of largely undisturbed dry forests, including two blocks each covering over 350 km². The biological value of these forests has not yet been adequately assessed but the implementation of the project will require the forcible re-settlement of 180,000 people, many of which are dependent on forest resources. Their forced removal and re-settlement to other forest areas would undoubtedly increase pressures on forests elsewhere. Financially, the project is estimated to cost US\$ 16,000,000,000 plus an equal amount in lost revenue from the submerged forests.

The World Bank, as a co-sponsor of this project, appointed Bradford Morse in 1991 to head an independent review of the environmental impacts of the project. The review team stated clearly its findings and recommendations: "The Sardar Sarovar Projects are flawed, that resettlement and rehabilitation of all those displaced by the projects is not possible under prevailing circumstances, and the environmental impacts of the projects have not been properly considered or adequately addressed....little can be achieved whilst construction continues." The report finds that the only viable solution would be for the bank to "step back from the projects and consider them afresh." On June 18 this year World Bank President Lewis Peterson insisted that "continued funding of the project is justified." Later in the month the World Bank indicated that it would proceed with the same strategy which the review team originally proclaimed a failure.

It is nothing short of hypocritical and perhaps the most outrageous manifestation ever of the "no U-turns" philosophy. The World Bank has and continues to lose credibility on this issue and the review process is revealed as having been a futile exercise. The project is *the* major environmental issue in India today and has assumed crisis proportions. The Bombay Natural History Society (BNHS), WWF-India and nearly 1,000 other NGOs concerned with nature conservation and development issues have declared their opposition to the project. Political initiatives have so far failed to stop the project and there is growing evidence that the Government of India is resorting to implementing the Official Secrets Act to silence the objections of conservationists.

Contributed by Jonathan Eames.

Cao Hai wetland under serious threat

Cao Hai (Grass Lake) is under serious threat from an uncontrolled building boom, according to an unusually frank article written by Tang Guoqun, an official at Cao Hai Nature Reserve, in the Chinese magazine *Da Zirand (Nature)*. The lake is located in Guizhou, China's second poorest province after Tibet, and is an important wintering ground for about 300 Black-necked Cranes *Grus nigricollis*. The threats are part of China's sweeping economic reform programme and provides a vivid indication of how the reforms are having an impact in one of the remotest regions of the country.

Cao Hai is perched on the edge of the Tibetan plateau, at 2,170 m. In theory, an area of about 50 km² - about one third of the Cao Hai basin - has been declared a nature reserve, but part of the problem is that the reserve boundaries have not been clearly defined. Tang reports that the lake and surrounding wetlands are fast being reclaimed for farming and building, and that in the last six years about 7 km² have been drained. "The Cao Hai wetlands face the danger of degradation along the lines shallow water to marsh to pasture to arable fields", Tang writes.

Tang also reports that the lake is shrinking, now averaging only 60 cm to 100 cm deep and covering just 10 km². Industrial pollution is also becoming a serious problem: in 1990 there were over 700 primitive zinc furnaces in the area, which are causing serious local water and air pollution. Furthermore, the large numbers of livestock that the newly arrived farmers have brought are degrading the grassland that provide the feeding habitat for the wildlife.

A key factor in saving Cao Hai could be tourism, and a recent official report indicates the authorities want to attract foreign tourists to Guizhou, a province that was closed to foreigners until a few years ago. According to the official Chinese news agency Zinhua, 80,000 foreigners are expected to visit Guizhou this year, double the 1991 total, but by 1995, 200,000 are expected to visit. Although tourism can of course create its own pressures and pollution, perhaps some can be encouraged to visit Cao Hai, creating an economic incentive to preserve this little-known Chinese pearl.

Contributed by Michael Rank, based on Da Ziran (Nature), 1992.2 and 1984.2, also Xinhua news agency, 21 Sept., 1992.

Long term studies at Kuala Lompat

Regular readers of the Bulletin may recall a request for volunteers to help in a project run by Dr. Charles Francis (*OBC Bull.* 14) based at Kuala Lompat in the Krau Game Reserve, Malaysia. Several OBC members responded to the request and this year took part in the work. The long-term project aims to gain a better understanding of the population dynamics and community ecology of birds and bats in the lowland forest.

Krau Game Reserve is one of the oldest protected areas in West Malaysia and has a total area of 55,000ha, about one quarter of which is lowland rainforest. It constitutes the second largest area of protected primary forest in the Peninsula. It is rarely visited by birders, because access is restricted by the Wildlife Department.

Research is conducted from the reserve base at Kuala Lompat on the south-eastern fringe of the reserve, at the confluence of the Krau and Lompat rivers. Work consisted mainly of ringing and colour-marking birds and observations of flocks and family groups. During the ringing programme 88 species were colour marked, including Crestless Fireback *Lophura erythrophthalma*, Banded Pitta *Pitta guajana*, Garnet Pitta *P. granatina*, Chestnut-capped Thrush *Zoothera interpres* and Black-and-white Bulbul *Pycnonotus melanoleucos*. Additional time was spent experimenting with song survey techniques and catching bats and small mammals. In all a total of 200 bird species was recorded.

During the study a number of nests were discovered. By far the most important discovery was the nest of a White-crowned Hornbill *Aceros comatus*, discovered by Catherine Jeffs on 22 May. This find probably constitutes only the second ever recorded nest of this species.

Contributed by Phil Benstead.

Western Tragopan update

Following the discovery of what is believed to be the world's largest remaining population of Western Tragopan *Tragopan melanocephalus* in the remote Palas valley in North-West Frontier Province of Pakistan in 1989, ICBP launched the Pakistan Himalayan Jungle Project in April 1991. This project is run in conjunction with Pakistan's federal and provincial wildlife departments and WWF Pakistan, with support from WWF International, the US Fish and Wildlife Service, the US Agency for International Development, the Overseas de-

velopment Administration, the World Pheasant Association and British Airways.

The project aims to secure protection for the forests of Palas and to promote the sustainable use of forest resources by local people. The greatest challenge facing ICBP's project officer is to devise ways of ensuring that the forests of Palas are not logged as is currently planned. The provincial forest department have indicated their willingness to consider a delay, or reduction, in the level

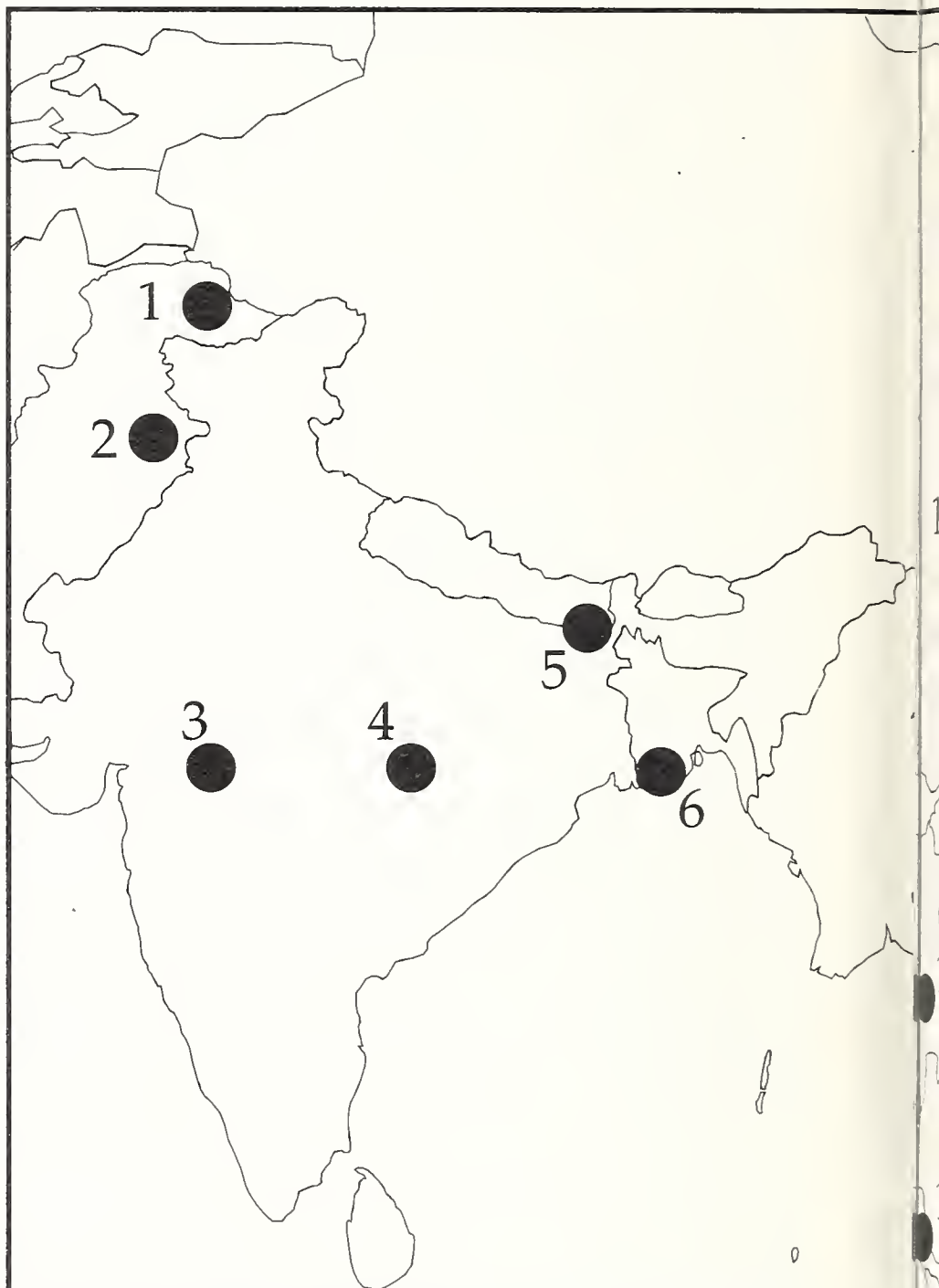


Figure 1. Map showing some of the localities featured in Around the Orient.

1 Palas valley, Pakistan; 2 Ucchali, Pakistan; 3 Sardar Sarovar Dam, India; 4 Keoladeo National Park, India; 5 Kosi Barage, Nepal; 6 Sundarbans Mangrove Forest, Bangladesh; 7 Qinghai Hu, China; 8 Yellow River Delta, China; 9 Xinghai Hu; 10 Cao Hai China; 11 Dongting Lake, China; 12 Poyang Lake; 13 Tsen-Wen River, Taiwan; 14 Dongzaigang, Hainan; 15 Vu Quang Nature Reserve, Viet Nam; 16 Beung Boraphet, Thailand; 17 Tonle Sap, Cambodia; 18 Khao-Pra Bang Kham Non-hunting Area, Thailand; 19 Kuala Lompat, Malaysia; 20 Johore state, Malaysia; 21 Klang Islands, Malaysia; 22 Berbak, Sumatra; 23 Kuala Belalong Field Studies Centre, Brunei; 24 Sabah, Malaysia; 25 Olango Island, Philippines; 26 Lake Tempe, Sulawesi; 27 Bali.

of planned logging activities, but consideration must also be given to the levels of revenue forgone by the local communities who own the forests. Many local people in Palas see logging of the forests as a means to increased wealth and it is difficult to convince them that conservation of these forests is the only long-term option to maintain the viability and prosperity of their communities.

Surveys conducted this year have made a number of significant finds in Palas, confirming its

conservation importance as the premier remaining example of West Himalayan moist temperate forest. The estimated population of Western Tragopan has now been revised upward to a minimum of 500 birds, at least five times greater than at any other known site. The valley is now also known to support populations of two other globally threatened species, Musk Deer *Moschus chrysogaster* and Himalayan Elm *Ulmus wallichiana*. Recent reports from Palasi villagers also indicate that the Cheer Pheasant *Catreus wallichii* may also occur in the valley.

More recently project activities took a dramatic twist following heavy rainfall in Palas from 7-10 September. Mountain streams and rivers burst their banks resulting in the destruction of almost every watermill and bridge in Palas. This resulted in immediate food shortages for the isolated communities in this remote valley. The project responded by securing food aid from Oxfam and Save the Children Fund (UK) which was trucked up to Pattan, the nearest bazaar-town on the Karakoram Highway, before being airlifted by helicopter to several points in the valley, from which the distribution of the food aid was arranged.

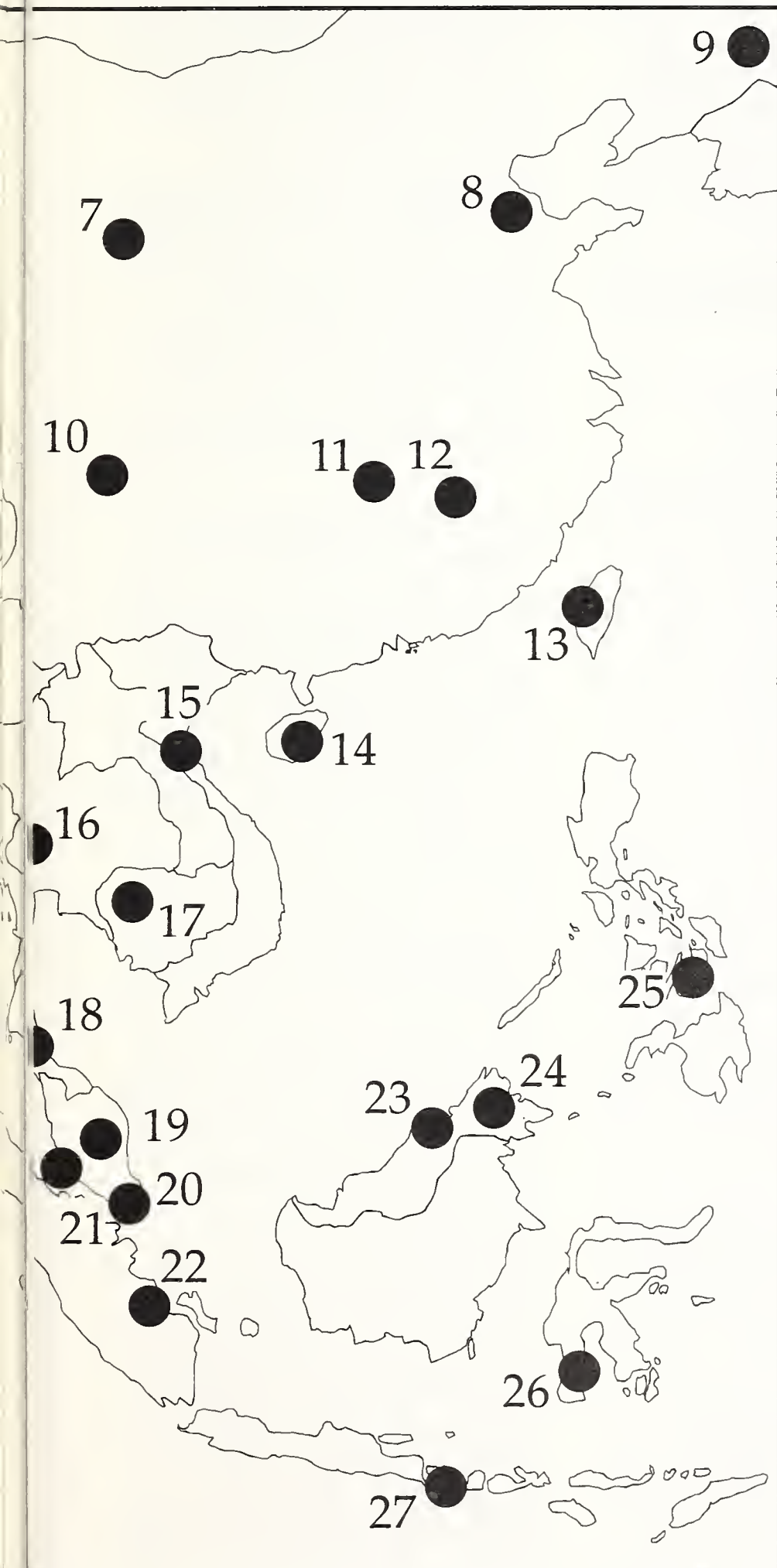
This task completed, the next job facing the project coordinator Guy Duke, is assisting the villagers with the reconstruction of their watermills. This illustrates only too well how conservation and development are inextricably linked.

Contributed by Jonathan Eames.

Blue-wattled Bulbul rediscovered

A number of sightings of birds believed to be the Blue-wattled Bulbul *Pycnonotus nieuwenhuisii* were made in September along the Belalong river near the Kuala Belalong Field Studies Centre in Temburong district, Brunei. The species is known from only two specimens, the first collected on the upper Kayan river, Kalimantan in 1901, and the second, of a distinct race, taken in 1939 in northern Sumatra.

The recent sightings of the species occurred during a period of mass fruiting of forest trees (especially of *Macaranga*), which caused an influx of several species of bulbuls to the area, including Black-and-white Bulbul *Pycnonotus melanoleucos* and Black-headed Bulbul *P. atriceps*. Single Blue-wattled Bulbuls were seen on five occasions; the first four sightings were thought to be of the same bird as they occurred in the same area over three days, and twice involving an individual feeding in



the same fruiting tree. The final sighting came two weeks later about 1 km downstream from the earlier observations.

These recent records from Brunei are from a lower elevation than the original two specimens which were both collected at sites above 500 m. However, the observers obtained very close views of the bulbul which is illustrated and described in

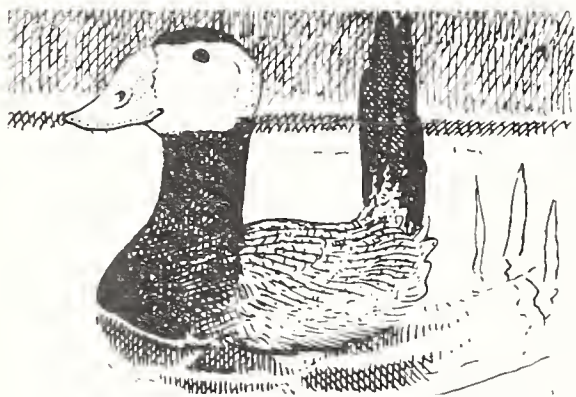
The Birds of Borneo (Smythies 1981), and will check their field notes against the type specimens. It is hoped that there will be more sightings of the species as the recently opened field centre (see Stray feathers) is attracting more visitors and fieldworkers, and has a number of permanent staff based there.

Source: Rob Williams and Tom Mitchell

White-headed Duck numbers fall in Pakistan

The number of White-headed Duck *Oxyura leucocephala* wintering in Pakistan has been decreasing at an alarming rate in recent years. In 1991, the peak count was 76 individuals compared to 733 in 1987. The major cause of the decline is thought to be habitat change, especially at Ucchali, which was formerly a stronghold for the Pakistan wintering population. Conservation efforts have been initiated at the regular wintering sites of the White-headed Duck and WWF-Pakistan has begun a study of the species in its wintering sites. However, these efforts need to be increased if the wintering population of the White-headed Duck is to be saved in Pakistan.

Source: IWRB Threatened Waterfowl Research Group newsletter no.2, June 1992.



White-headed Duck *Oxyura leucocephala* by Martin Woodcock

Japan's log imports fall

Japan's imports of logs from South-East Asia in 1990/1991 fell to the lowest level since 1966 and were nearly 9% less than imports

in the previous year. This reduction in log imports, almost 90% of which come from Malaysia, is attributable to a cutback in the production of plywood and lumber.

Source: TRAFFIC Bulletin Vol. 13(1).

Sri Lanka begins programme to protect its forests

Emergency regulations to halt illegal logging have been officially declared by Sri Lanka's President Ranasinghe Premadasa. Strict penalties for forest destruction can now be given by the Chairman of the Central Environmental Authority ranging from two to 10 year's imprisonment and a fine of R100,000 to R500,000 (US\$ 2,350 - US\$ 11,760). The new measures were introduced following a press release from the President's Secretariat in Colombo, Sri Lanka on 30 March 1992 stating that large-scale felling of State forests had caused great concern to the Government and existing laws were ineffective in preventing the destruction of the remaining Sri Lankan forests.

Source: TRAFFIC Bulletin Vol. 13(1).

Viet Nam halts timber exports

Viet Nam's Prime Minister, Vo Van Kiet, has announced a ban on the export of timber and sawn wood and ordered the withdrawal of all export permits issued this year. According to an official report of the Biet Nam News Agency (VNA) dated 26

March 1992, the Trade and Tourism Ministry and the Forestry Ministry have been ordered to check the validity of permits issued to sawmills and to encourage makers of brick, lime and pottery to use coal instead of charcoal and wood. The Prime Minister cited widespread destruction of forests in central and southern Viet Nam as the reason for making the orders.

Source: TRAFFIC Bulletin Vol. 13(1).

CITES lifts trade boycott on Thailand

The recommended ban on trade in CITES specimens with Thailand was lifted in April of this year following efforts by the Government of Thailand to enable enforcement of CITES regulations. These efforts included the approval of a new wildlife law allowing full implementation of CITES with regard to wild fauna, and the drafting of similar legislation for wild flora.

The Wild Animals Preservation and Protection Act (B.E. 2535) replaces a previous protection act, and provides Thai authorities with the legal means to implement CITES. The Act, which came into effect on 28 February 1992, will regulate captive-breeding of protected wildlife, zoos, and imports, exports and transit shipments of wildlife. Under the legislation, animal species are divided into two categories: 'Protected Species' and

'Endangered Wildlife'. 'Protected Species' include those species (excluding plants) listed in the CITES Appendices and those protected in Thailand and listed in existing legislation; 'Endangered Wildlife' includes those species occurring in Thailand and listed as endangered such as White-eyed River Martin *Pseudochelidon sirintarae*, Gurney's Pitta *Pitta gurneyi* and Sarus Crane *Grus antigone*.

Source: *TRAFFIC Bulletin Vol. 13(1)*.

Indonesia registers wildlife

The deadline by which all privately-kept protected species in Indonesia had to be registered with the Department of Forestry passed on 31 May 1992.

Protected wildlife in Indonesia is the property of the State, and cannot be privately-owned, but persons in possession of registered wildlife will usually be able to keep the animals under a special permit from the State. Now privately-kept protected wildlife that is not registered is liable to be confiscated and the offender will be subject to imprisonment and fines.

Source: *TRAFFIC Bulletin Vol. 13(1)*.

Corporation set up to manage forest areas

The state of Johore in Peninsular Malaysia is creating a State National Parks Corporation (JNPC) to develop as well as protect 10 of its larger forest areas. The corporation is to manage the national parks and forest reserves including the development of tourist facilities.

The JNPC is the first corporation in Malaysia set up to manage forest reserves. The state government currently allocates about M\$ 250,000 each year for the running of forest reserves but the maintenance

costs are expected to escalate with the creation of the corporation. It has been proposed that the corporation charges entry fees to the reserves and national parks to relieve the state government of the increased financial burden.

It is probable that the JNPC will manage the Endau-Rompin Forest Reserve, which attracts thousands of foreign and domestic tourists annually. Plans for Endau Rompin would include the upgrading of the road leading to the forest, which is now passable only to four-wheel drive vehicles, and the construction of chalets and hostels and a nature trail system.

Source: *Malayan Naturalist Vol 45(4)*.

China, Indonesia and Bangladesh join Ramsar

On 20 February 1992, The People's Republic of China joined the Ramsar Convention and has agreed to designate six wetland sites for the Ramsar list. The sites are Poyang Lake, Jiangxi Province; Dongzaigang, Hainan Island; Dongting Lake, Hunan Province; Xianghai, Jilin Province and Qinghai Hu, Qinghai Province. The Ministry of Forestry will be the agency for all issues related to the convention.

Indonesia and Bangladesh have also acceded to the Convention recently and respectively have designated Berbak in Sumatra, comprising some 162,700 ha, and Sundarbans Mangrove Forest for the Ramsar list.

Source: *Ramsar Database 8 September 1992*.

Forestry Department detects illegal logging

Arrests in Sabah between 1987 and 1991 in connection with illegal logging totalled ninety-nine

people according to State Forestry chief Datuk Miller Munang. Illegal logging is expected to be detected more efficiently with the recent creation of a strategic control centre. The centre has already enabled the state forestry department to keep track of sources of timber at factories and ports, based on statistics stored in a database. Recently 634 logs which were being illegally exported to Japan were discovered by the forest department. Other measures taken to monitor timber resources include satellite photographs and monthly aerial surveys.

Source: *Malayan Naturalist Vol 45(4)*.

Protection for Houbara Bustard

History was made in Pakistan on 16 August 1992, when the Sindh High Court, Karachi gave a verdict in favour of a constitutional writ petition submitted by the Society for Conservation and Protection of the Environment (SCOPE). This petition was filed for the protection of the Houbara Bustard *Chlamydotis undulata*.

The species has increasingly become a victim of falconry. Most of the falconers are Arab princes and Sheikhs from the Middle East. The royal hunters were enjoying the hospitality of the Pakistan Government which issued special permits to the falconers, for hunting and for training falcons. The victory for SCOPE in the courts means that it will be difficult for such permits to be issued in the future.

The Houbara Bustard is a winter visitor to Pakistan from breeding grounds in the CIS. Excessive hunting of the Houbara Bustard and the destruction of its natural habitat has caused a dramatic decline of the species.

Source: *SCOPE press release*.

Tourist plans for Fraser's Hill, Malaysia

Fraser's Hill has long been a popular destination to Malaysian and foreign birdwatchers because of its wealth of resident and migrant species. Now measures are being taken to attract other visitors to this hill resort. The Fraser's Hill Development Corporation (FHDC) is injecting several million Malaysian dollars to develop the infrastructure, recreational and accommodation facilities. The project includes a M\$318 million golf course, new bungalows and a 200 room low-budget hotel, and a new M\$20 million road leading to the resort.

The developments are part of the corporation's efforts to promote Fraser's Hill as a major family resort for Malaysians and to achieve a target of 1.5 million tourists in five years, compared to the 130,000 visitors recorded in 1991.

Source: *Malayan Naturalist* Vol 45(4).

Training course in wildlife management for Cambodians

Cambodia, for so long ravaged by civil war, is initiating a wildlife management strategy now that the country has become relatively stable. A group of wildlife experts from the Forestry Department of Thailand and the International Crane Foundation (ICF) visited Cambodia in March 1992 (see also the following news item). The group signed an agreement with the Cambodian Department of Forestry that will bring five Cambodians to Thailand and to USA for training in wildlife management.

Source: *The ICF Bugle* Vol 18 (2).

Aerial survey of Tonle Sap conducted

The largest lake in Indochina. Tonle Sap was the focus of a survey of Cambodian wetlands, in March of this year. Thai and International Crane Foundation staff carried out an aerial survey of wetlands that surround the lake, which is nearly 120 km long, and the wetlands of the Mekong river.

During the dry season, Asian Openbills *Anastomus oscitans*, Lesser Adjutants *Leptoptilos javanicus*, Spot-billed Pelicans *Pelecanus philippensis* and Little Cormorants *Phalacrocorax niger* find an abundance of fish trapped in the shrinking wetlands. There are three major colonies of these species in trees on the southwest side of the lake. The lake was full of birdlife with thousands of white egrets dotting the trees and shallows, and Purple Swampheens *Porphyrio porphyrio*, Oriental Darters *Anhinga melanogaster*, and rafts of Lesser Whistling-Ducks *Dendrocygna javanica* along the grassy fringes. Source: *The ICF Bugle* Vol 18 (2).

Pesticides poison Sarus Cranes

Pesticides are thought to be the latest threats to the Sarus Crane *Grus antigone* which has declined dramatically in India in recent times. In Keoladeo National Park, crane numbers have dropped from 27 pairs in 1973 to just six in 1990 and these figures reflect the general downward trend for the species in adjacent areas.

The decline of the cranes was formerly due to loss of its wetland habitat but recent studies conducted by S. Muralidharan have shown that the use of pesticides to increase agricultural production is now a greater threat. At least 18

Sarus Cranes are known to have died between 1988 and 1990 in Keoladeo National Park through poisoning and the actual figure is probably much higher.

Other bird species that are high up in the food chain are also being affected. High levels of organochlorides such as DDT have been found in the eggs of some species of herons, egrets, storks and cormorants at Bharatpur. Clearly more careful use of pesticides and agricultural chemicals is necessary if the local extinction of the Sarus Crane and the decline of the wintering population of Siberian Cranes *Grus leucogeranus* is to be halted. Source: *Hornbill* Vol (1).

More Crested Ibis hatch at Peking Zoo

Chinese zoologists have succeeded in breeding three Crested Ibises *Nipponia nippon* by artificial incubation, further raising hopes of saving this extremely rare species from extinction. The official Zinhua News Agency said the chicks hatched at Peking Zoo on May 4 after a 26-day incubation period, and that all previous attempts at breeding the species in captivity had failed. By early July the chicks weighed about 1,400 grammes each.

Six birds have been taken from Yang Zian in Shaanxi province, where the Crested Ibis was rediscovered in 1981 after being feared extinct in the wild. There was disappointment in 1988 and 1990 when young chicks at the zoo died and one chick that hatched in July 1989 (see *OBC Bull.* 10, p.9) apparently did not survive. In the wild, there are about 40 birds in the Yang Zian Reserve, Xinhua reported.

Contributed by Michael Rank, based on Xinhua report, 2 July 1992.

Update on cranes in China

According to a recent report on the cranes wintering in the Yellow River Delta about 3,000 Common Cranes *Grus grus* occur there annually. Smaller numbers of Red-crowned Crane *G. japonensis* (52), White-naped *G. vipio* (five) and Demoiselle *G. virgo* (three) were also reported wintering in the delta.

A separate report details the cranes in the Da Hing'an Ling mountains of Inner Mongolia near the Russian border in extreme northeastern China. Two Siberian Cranes *G. leucogeranus* have been seen in the area, one of which was shot, but it is unclear by whom. Apparently, Red-crowned, White-naped and Common Cranes also breed in small numbers in the Da Hing'an Ling Mountains. The area is about 1,000 km northeast of Dalainor (Hulun Nur) where the International Crane Foundation (ICF) hopes to establish a reserve.

Contributed by Michael Rank, based on reports in *Yesheng Dongwu* (Chinese Wildlife), 1992 (4). Further details are available on request from Michael Rank c/o OBC.

Protection for Olango Island

In May of this year Olango Island was gazetted as a wildlife sanctuary, by presidential decree. This welcome move came after four years of constant lobbying by the Asian Wetland Bureau Philippines Foundation Inc. (AWBPFI), and a workshop held in January 1992 to develop a management plan for the wetland. Olango Island is located between Cebu and Bohol islands, and comprises coral reefs, intertidal sandflats, seagrass beds, and

mangroves. It is an important staging area for shorebirds with 40,000 to 60,000 recorded during the autumn passage.

Source: *Asian Wetland News* 4:2.

Gurney's Pitta update

During the 1992 breeding season up to 19 pairs of Gurney's Pitta were located in Khao-Pra Bang Khram Non-hunting Area and in adjacent forest areas around the village of Bang Ban Tio and in the Khlong Thom basin. The census focused on suitable habitat in the core area of the reserve in the vicinity of Bang Ban Tio and was not a complete census of the entire Non-hunting Area. Pairs are known from elsewhere in the reserve, including in the vicinity of the village of Aow Tong and therefore this figure should be viewed as an absolute minimum for the entire area.

Although the population of Gurney's Pitta in Khao-Pra Bang Khram Non-Hunting Area represents the only known viable population of the species, it should be pointed-out that a handful of pairs are also known to occur in other remaining patches of suitable habitat in peninsular Thailand, including one other protected area.

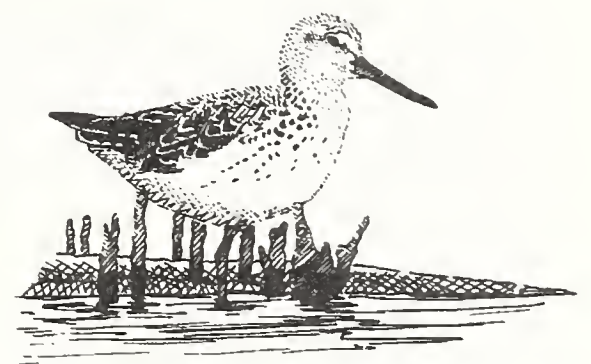
Source: *ICBP Gurney's Pitta project*.

Shorebirds find use for power station

A roosting site which is used by up to 10,000 shorebirds feeding on the intertidal mudflats around the Klang Islands off the west coast of Peninsular Malaysia has been found. The roost is on the settling pools of the Sultan Salahuddin Abdul Aziz Power Station near the town of Kapar. Highest numbers

have been recorded during spring tides when all shorebirds are forced off the mudflats. A wide variety of species have been observed including Nordmann's Greenshank *Tringa guttifer* and Asian Dowitcher *Limnodromus semipalmatus*. The Asian Wetland Bureau (AWB) are collaborating with the power station managers to ensure that the roosting site remains safe from disturbance. A ringing programme of the shorebirds will investigate premigratory fat build up and moult patterns.

Source: *Asian Wetland News* 4:2.



Nordmann's Greenshank *Tringa guttifer* by Dave Bakewell

Cockatoo receives help in Sumba

A three year moratorium on the capture and export of Yellow-crested Cockatoo *Cacatua sulphurea citrinocristata* on the island of Sumba, Indonesia was announced this year by the Indonesian authorities. The enforcement of the moratorium so far appears to have been strictly adhered to, and it is hoped that the depleted populations of this endemic subspecies will soon benefit from these regulations.

Contributed by Paul Jepson.

Black-faced Spoonbill in Taiwan

Plans by the Government of Taiwan for industrial development in the Tsen-Wen River estuary in the south-west of the island have been temporarily halted following a campaign by the Wild Bird Society of the Republic of China (Taiwan) in conjunction with the Specialist Group on Storks, Ibises and Spoonbills. The estuary is an especially important wintering area for waders and waterfowl including the globally threatened Black-faced Spoonbill *Platalea minor*. About 200 of these spoonbills winter in the area, which is about two-thirds of the known world population.

The government has been asked to assess carefully the survival and habitat needs of the Black-faced Spoonbill and they have initiated a number of measures, including the appointment of Dr In Wang to investigate the needs of the wintering Black-faced Spoonbill in the estuary. The spoonbill was listed as an endangered species in 1 July 1992, under Taiwan's Wildlife Conservation Law. A public awareness programme will be launched to stress the importance of protecting threatened species such as the Black-faced Spoonbill in Taiwan. *Source: Wild Bird Society of China (Taiwan) press release.*

Bali Starling population increase

From an all-time low of 18 in 1990 the Bali Starling *Leucopsar rothschildi* population has begun to show signs of recovery. For the second consecutive year the species has enjoyed a successful breeding season and the wild population now stands at 55 individuals. The credit for this increase is due to the efforts of the staff of Bali Barat National Park

who, with help from ICBP, have stepped-up protection activities and reduced the numbers of birds illegally trapped for the cage-bird trade.

The Bali Starling should also benefit from new legislation which aims to regulate the possession of protected fauna by private individuals (see Indonesia registers wildlife). The American Association for Zoological Parks and Aquaria (AAZPA) who currently coordinate the captive breeding of the species have given their support to a scheme whereby any wild Bali Starlings brought in for exchange can be swapped for captive bred birds, which have a lower conservation value for release.

Contributed by Paul Jepson

Changes at Kosi Barrage

As a result of a unusually heavy monsoon in 1986, the course of the Kosi River near the Kosi Barrage in eastern Nepal has been significantly altered. South of the dam the course of the river has shifted to the west and has engulfed the areas of cultivation frequented by Bengal Florican *Eupodotis bengalensis*, Indian Courser *Cursorius coromandelicus* and White-throated Bushchat *Saxicola insignis*. North of the barrage the river has shifted eastwards inundating parts of the Kosi Tappu Wildlife Sanctuary. It is difficult to judge the impact of this event on the habitat and bird communities but the shift in the river course apparently displaced numbers of Swamp Francolins *Francolinus gularis*, which are now seen more easily.

A recent visit by David Mills and H. S. Baral has revealed a new threat to birds in the area. The numbers of people living around the barrage has increased

significantly and what was once a small truck-stop, lying immediately east of the dam, has grown into a small town. More alarming still are the numbers of people trapping birds in mist-nets in the reed-beds near this new town. David and Hem estimated that over 500 metres of net were being set during their visit. The bird catchers reported catching waterfowl, hirundines and birds of prey including Black-winged Kite *Elanus caeruleus* and Red-necked Falcon *Falco chicquera*. All the birds caught were reported as sold for food in the local market. *Contributed by Jonathan Eames.*

Fifth International pheasant symposium Lahore, Pakistan

The fifth international pheasant symposium was held in Lahore, Pakistan from 27 September to 1 October. The symposium, hosted by the World Pheasant Association, Pakistan, was attended by about 200 delegates, with many representatives particularly from China and India. Most of those attending were concerned with research or conservation of galliformes in Asia, whilst a small number of aviculturists also attended. Delegates received status reports from most countries in Asia, and topics discussed during the week included habitat use and diet, survey, monitoring and the management of populations. The proceedings concluded by passing a resolution calling on the Governments of China, Myanmar, India and Thailand to implement conservation action for two globally threatened species, Hume's Pheasant *Syrnaticus humiae* and Sclater's Monal *Lophophorus sclateri*.

Contributed by Jonathan Eames

Night migration at Fraser's Hill, Peninsular Malaysia

David Wells, the author of this article, has long been involved in monitoring bird migrations at Fraser's Hill, Peninsular Malaysia. Between 1965 and 1973, over 9,000 birds of 76 species were intercepted crossing the mountain ridge at Fraser's Hill. Trapping at night was affected by the weather and the moon. Nomadic tropical forest frugivores formed one-third of the catch. Catches conducted in the 1980s show that the proportion of pigeons trapped have plummeted compared to the sixties and seventies.

Falls of birds at traditional harvesting sites in the Asian tropics have been linked to a phenomenon familiar at lighthouses, gas-flaring oil-rigs, etc. around the world; namely that lights in the right place, season and weather lure sometimes large numbers of night-flying migrants. Lighthouse keepers of the Malacca Straits have long known this happens⁶ and on land birds up to Black Bittern *Ixobrychus flavicollis* size have often been reported blundering into lighted buildings. Major falls were discovered when a brief hostility between Indonesia and newly formed Malaysia caused the nation's high ground telecommunication relay stations to be equipped with defensive flood lights.

There were two of these sites at Fraser's Hill resort, which lies on a section of the main ridge running roughly east west (Figure 1). From one of these, reflectors beamed 3000W into north running valleys. In late 1964, University of Malaya biologists happened to be at the site after dark and found the guards collecting a generous ration of green pigeons. Many pigeons, particularly when pushed by a monsoon tailwind, had killed themselves against the stations's north perimeter fence and lower struts of the pylon, below and behind the lights.

The scale of night movements by tropical pigeons had come as a surprise, but gave no clear indication of what other species might be found. Museum collecting in the past had led to the conclusion that migration funnelled along coasts and islands, but a few true migrants (Blue-winged Pitta *Pitta moluccensis*, Orange-headed Thrush *Zoothera citrina*) had been intercepted on other mountain tops. However, the sight of the station compound at Fraser's Hill hopping with pittas and warblers soon confirmed the view that some species migrate along mountain tops.

Soon after the initial discovery, by arrangement with Malaysian Telecoms, the brightest light source

for hundreds of square kilometres around was made available to a ringing project, run by the Zoology Department in conjunction with a regional programme, M.A.P.S. A line of mist nets covering 380m² were set up in front of the main approaches to the lights, and to reduce bird losses the lights were used only with nets in place.



Figure 1. Map showing the location of Fraser's Hill

Mist nets was used during the following eight consecutive years, until eventually a good picture of bird movements during the months of August through to December and April to May was built up⁴. January and February were covered later with occasional visits⁸. During the project, which began in October 1965, a total of 9,218 individuals were ringed of 76 species (Table 1), a small proportion of these that could only have been residents disturbed from nearby roosts (including some

swifts on the wing). In later years Tufted Duck *Aythya fuligula*, Masked Finfoot *Heliopais personata* and Blue-and-white Flycatcher *Cyanoptila cyanomelana* were recorded for the first time, but no new species have been added since 1975.

Fewer species have been recorded at Fraser's Hill than by the light-trappers on Dalton Pass, Luzon in the Philippines^{1,3}. The difference may be partly explained by the difference in latitude and perhaps by the number of species included for Dalton Pass, that are unlikely to have been moving at night (large raptors, etc). Parallels and differences are reviewed by McClure³.

One of many surprises at Fraser's was that it added so little to the Peninsula fauna list: only Siberian Rubythroat *Luscinia calliope* (a fat male in breeding plumage returning north in May 1968) and a possible Gould's Bronze-Cuckoo *Chrysococcyx russatus* (collected) is still under consideration. These one-off occurrences were exciting, but less meaningful than collecting new information on the regular migrants. Big extensions of the known regular winter range of, for example, Two-barred Warbler *Phylloscopus plumbeitarsus* and Hill Blue-Flycatcher *Cyornis banyumas* (the Chinese form *magnirostris*) is of much value for conservation.

It is also interesting to note that the migration stream included a greater than expected mix of populations. Among easily identified species, some Hodgson's Hawk-Cuckoos *Cuculus fugax* and Drongo Cuckoos *Surniculus lugubris* caught fitted subspecies belonging to the Peninsula itself, implying migration from much further south than expected, as well as from the northern populations, which are more expected to undertake long distance migration. This phenomena has since been confirmed for a number of other species (see the maps in Boonsong & Round, 1991²). Two Hodgson's Hawk-Cuckoos trapped at the lights in November 1986 are still a puzzle. Similar in colour and pattern to the form *nisicolor*, they showed uniquely long wings (188 and 193 mm) and no similar birds have yet been found in museum collections.

The most important results of the project were ecological; showing how migration proceeds on a broader-front than realised and providing more details on intensity of passage - for example it was soon discovered that catches dropped to zero over the full moon period, regardless of date. To build up a full seasonal picture of movement it was

necessary to use observations collected over several years - which were of course influenced by the secondary factor of short-term weather effects. Cloud, rain and wind-strength definitely had an effect on the number of birds caught. The murkier the weather, in general, the more birds were caught, but if there was only ground-level cloud just skimming the ridge crest migrants would have free passage overhead, often within earshot.

Despite these problems the results which emerged still forms the core of our information on land bird migration in the Peninsula (the patterns are reviewed by Medway⁴). One of the more interesting facts is the unexplained difference of almost one month between the peak passage of Blue-winged Pitta in October, and that of Hooded Pitta *Pitta sordida* in November, even though they breed and winter over common latitudes. Some results were good enough to show differences at population level, as between short- and long-winged Siberian Blue Robins which probably make autumn journeys of different lengths. The peak movement of passerines continued for one month from about 20 September. The larger thrushes (Eyebrowed *Turdus obscurus*, Siberian *Zoothera sibirica* and Orange-headed) were consistently later, rarely appearing before late November and it is suspected these winter frugivores make multi-stage migrations involving longish halts⁹.

Among the thousands of birds handled at Fraser's Hill, none had been previously ringed, and only a handful of birds ringed there have been recovered. However, information of real significance has been gathered on ringed Emerald Doves *Chalcophaps indica* and Jambu Fruit-Doves *Ptilinopus jambu* reported up to 800 km away in various parts of Sumatra (including one controlled by Interpol!), demonstrating the extent of nomadism by these frugivorous. An Emerald Dove ringed in Sabah and recently recovered on Tawitawi island shows that movements of this kind are not uncommon, and this species is also listed for Dalton Pass. An immature Chestnut Bittern *Ixobrychus cinnamomeus* recovered near the Malaysia-Thai border only weeks after being ringed at Fraser's Hill had travelled in precisely the opposite direction predicted for waterbird movement at that time of year.

Some observations were made at Fraser's Hill on the physical condition of intercepted migrants, including weights⁵, and flight-muscle bulk versus visible fat⁷. Some of these data have been used to

calculate the length of onward migration-hops in spring - apparently very short for some birds of the forest understorey⁹ that winter in the Peninsula.

Not too much should be read into the difference in bird numbers recorded in autumn and spring (Appendix 1). These reflect the greater effort made in autumn and the much less favourable trapping conditions in spring. Also, some common species (Black-backed Kingfisher *Ceyx erithacus*) pass through in March, before the spring work began. A point of genuine interest in comparative numbers was how few birds were trapped which are common on the open coastal plains of the Peninsula. For example, only two Common Kingfishers *Alcedo atthis* were caught compared to more than 300 Black-backed Kingfishers, 63 Brown compared to 201 Tiger Shrikes, and only eight Oriental Reed-Warblers *Acrocephalus orientalis*. Excluding the pigeons, I have calculated only about one in 15 individuals caught at Fraser's Hill sought a non-wooded habitat while about half were selecting some type of original forest. Perhaps those species requiring non-wooded habitat take different routes; or despite localized concentrations on the ground, this may have been their genuine representation in a broad-front movement heading for what in the 1960s and early 70s was still a region mainly of forests.

Pigeons accounted for more than one-third of total birds caught, most of these being forest frugivores (no non-forest species were caught). Some species were recorded in all months sampled suggesting that their night-time movements may continue throughout the year. Among true migrants, as opposed to these nomadic birds, no-one would have predicted the number of pittas (over 100 ringed on some nights), or that one of the commonest northern migrants would be a bird as little-known as Brown-chested Jungle-Flycatcher *Rhinomyias brunneata*, which is hardly seen except when it is caught in a mist-net. Perhaps the main winter quarters of this species have not yet been found.

The relay station at Fraser's Hill was dismantled ten years ago but bird research using the flood lights or portable substitutes continued there until the late 1980s, in the hope of detecting changes with time. Recent netting sessions have avoided the full moon but have been short and occasional, making the results difficult to interpret. The portable lights are not nearly as powerful as the originals, and the number of birds caught has been far

less than the best ringing session of the sixties. Only one conclusion about numbers seems safe; this is that pigeon numbers have plummeted. There may be some local reasons but a link to the great loss of lowland forest is hard to reject, and that should sound the alarm for the winter status of many true migrants as well. Brown-chested Jungle-Flycatcher, for example, needs mature forest apparently exclusively off the hills, which of course is the zone of heaviest pressure on land use.

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Appendix 1.

Numbers of night-flying birds caught at Fraser's Hill during spring (April-May) and autumn (August-December), 1965 to 1973. Numbers in brackets refer to spring and autumn totals respectively.

BLUE-BREASTED QUAIL	<i>Coturnix chinensis</i> (1/1)
DOLLARBIRD	<i>Eurystomus orientalis</i> (0/13)
COMMON KINGFISHER	<i>Alcedo atthis</i> (0/2)
BLACK-BACKED KINGFISHER	<i>Ceyx erithacus</i> (0/340)
RUDDY KINGFISHER	<i>Halcyon coromanda</i> (5/22)
BLACK-CAPPED KINGFISHER	<i>H. pileata</i> (0/36)
COLLARED KINGFISHER	<i>Todirhamphus chloris</i> (1/1)
CHESTNUT-WINGED CUCKOO	<i>Clamator coromandus</i> (1/69)
LARGE HAWK-CUCKOO	<i>Cuculus sparveroides</i> (1/1*)
HODGSON'S HAWK-CUCKOO	<i>C. fugax</i> (0/17)
INDIAN CUCKOO	<i>C. micropterus</i> (2/27)
ORIENTAL CUCKOO	<i>C. saturatus</i> (2/1*)
BRONZE-CUCKOO SP.	<i>Chrysococcyx</i> sp. (0/1)
VIOLET CUCKOO	<i>C. xanthorhynchus</i> (0/36)
DRONGO CUCKOO	<i>Surniculus lugubris</i> (0/113)
ASIAN KOEL	<i>Eudynamys scolopacea</i> (0/3)
BLUE-CROWNED	
HANGING-PARROT	<i>Loriculus galgulus</i> (1/1)
WATERFALL SWIFT	<i>Hydrochous gigas</i> (0/5*)
HIMALAYAN SWIFTLET	<i>Collocalia brevirostris</i> (0/3)
BLACK-NEST SWIFTLET	<i>C. maxima</i> (0/2*)
GERMAN'S SWIFTLET	<i>C. germani</i> (0/1*)
SILVER-BACKED	
NEEDLETAIL	<i>Hirundapus cochinchinensis</i> (0/0/9)
BROWN-BACKED NEEDLETAIL	<i>H. giganteus</i> (0/1/20)
FORK-TAILED SWIFT	<i>Apus pacificus</i> (0/11)
MOUNTAIN SCOPS-OWL	<i>Otus spilocephalus</i> (0/2*)
ORIENTAL SCOPS-OWL	<i>O. sunia</i> (0/28)
BROWN HAWK-OWL	<i>Ninox scutulata</i> (0/1)
GREY NIGHTJAR	<i>Caprimulgus indicus</i> (3/9)
BARRED CUCKOO-DOVE	<i>Macropygia unchall</i> (0/2)
EMERALD DOVE	<i>Chalcophaps indica</i> (45/589)
LITTLE GREEN-PIGEON	<i>Treron olax</i> (4/4)
THICK-BILLED	
GREEN-PIGEON	<i>T. curvirostra</i> (26/268)
LARGE GREEN-PIGEON	<i>T. capellei</i> (0/1)
YELLOW-VENTED	
GREEN-PIGEON	<i>T. seimundi</i> (2/5)
JAMBU FRUIT-DOVE	<i>Ptilinopus jambu</i> (37/2,107)
MOUNTAIN IMPERIAL PIGEON	<i>Ducula badia</i> (0/1)
RED-LEGGED CRAKE	<i>Rallina fasciata</i> (9/116)
SLATY-LEGGED CRAKE	<i>R. eurizonoides</i> (2/3)
WHITE-BREASTED WATERHEN	<i>Amaurornis phoenicurus</i> (0/1)
BAND-BELLIED CRAKE	<i>Porzana paykullii</i> (2/1)
WATERCOCK	<i>Gallicrex cinerea</i> (1/10)
PINTAIL SNIPE	<i>Gallinago stenura</i> (0/1)
STRIATED HERON	<i>Butorides striatus</i> (0/1)
MALAYAN NIGHT-HERON	<i>Gorsachius melanolophus</i> (3/6)
YELLOW BITTERN	<i>Ixobrychus sinensis</i> (0/16)
SCHRENCK'S BITTERN	<i>I. eurhythmus</i> (0/3)
CINNAMON BITTERN	<i>I. cinnamomeus</i> (3/3)
BLACK BITTERN	<i>I. flavicollis</i> (1/18)
HOODED PITTA	<i>Pitta sordida</i> (98/1,266)
BLUE-WINGED PITTA	<i>P. moluccensis</i> (24/564)
GREEN BROADBILL	<i>Calyptomena viridis</i> (0/4)
TIGER SHRIKE	<i>Lanius tigrinus</i> (27/201)
BROWN SHRIKE	<i>L. cristatus</i> (4/63)
CROW-BILLED DRONGO	<i>Dicrurus annectans</i> (6/306)
ASIAN PARADISE-FLYCATCHER	<i>Terpsiphone paradisi</i> (3/78)

BLUE ROCK-THRUSH	<i>Monticola solitarius</i> (0/1)
ORANGE-HEADED THRUSH	<i>Zoothera citrina</i> (2/14)
SIBERIAN THRUSH	<i>Z. sibirica</i> (0/41)
EYEBROWED THRUSH	<i>Turdus obscurus</i> (0/6)
BROWN-CHESTED	
JUNGLE-FLYCATCHER	<i>Rhinomyias brunneata</i> (12/640)
DARK-SIDED FLYCATCHER	<i>Muscicapa sibirica</i> (0/15)
ASIAN BROWN FLYCATCHER	<i>M. dauurica</i> (0/221)
FERRUGINOUS FLYCATCHER	<i>M. ferruginea</i> (0/95)
YELLOW-RUMPED FLYCATCHER	<i>Ficedula zanthopygia</i> (16/560)
NARCISSUS FLYCATCHER	<i>F. narcissina</i> (0/1)
MUGIMAKI FLYCATCHER	<i>F. mugimaki</i> (0/9)
BLUE-THROATED FLYCATCHER	<i>Cyornis rubeculoides</i> (0/111)
HILL BLUE-FLYCATCHER	<i>C. banyumas</i> (0/11)
SIBERIAN RUBYTHROAT	<i>Luscinia calliope</i> (0/1)
SIBERIAN BLUE ROBIN	<i>L. cyane</i> (30/656)
ASIAN GLOSSY STARLING	<i>Aplonis panayensis</i> (0/2)
PURPLE-BACKED STARLING	<i>Sturnus sturninus</i> (0/5)
LANCEOLATED WARBLER	<i>Locustella lanceolata</i> (3/112)
PALLAS'S WARBLER	<i>L. certhiola</i> (0/73)
ORIENTAL REED-WARBLER	<i>Acrocephalus orientalis</i> (1/7)
MOUNTAIN TAILORBIRD	<i>Orthotomus cuculatus</i> (0/1*)
INORNATE WARBLER	<i>Phylloscopus inornatus</i> (0/7)
ARCTIC WARBLER	<i>P. borealis</i> (14/286)
TWO-BARRED WARBLER	<i>P. plumbeitarsus</i> (0/3)
EASTERN CROWNED-WARBLER	<i>P. coronatus</i> (1/575)
RUFIOUS-WINGED FULVETTA	<i>Alcippe castaneiceps</i> (0/2*)
STREAKED SPIDERHUNTER	<i>Arachnothera magna</i> (0/1)
FOREST WAGTAIL	<i>Dendronanthus indicus</i> (0/1)
YELLOW WAGTAIL	<i>Motacilla flava</i> (0/1)

Note: Asterisks denote resident birds probably disturbed from nearby roosts).

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1. Black-backed Kingfisher *Ceyx erithacus*
Although recently treated as a single species by Fry et al. (1992), Sibley and Monroe (1990) treat the Rufous-backed Kingfisher *C. rufidorsa* as a full species (Photo: C. Prentice).

2. Hooded Pitta *P. sordida cucullata*
The most frequently trapped migrant passerine at Fraser's Hill between 1965 and 1973 (Photo: C. Prentice).

3. Jambu Fruit-Dove *Ptilinopus jambu*
Male (left) and female (right). The drab female is more easily overlooked than the spectacular male (Photo: C. Prentice).

4. Schrenck's Bittern *Ixobrychus eurhythmus*
Female. This long-distance migrant breeds as far north as Manchuria and Siberia and winters to Sulawesi and the Philippines (Photo: C. Prentice).



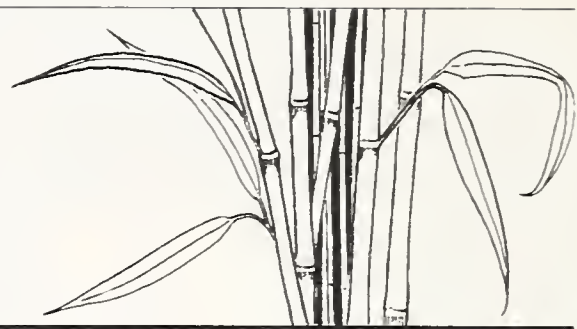
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Birdwatching areas

Danum Valley Conservation Area, Sabah, Malaysia.



The Danum Valley Conservation Area, situated along the upper reaches of the Segama River, lies within the largest remaining area of primary lowland rainforest in Sabah. It is undoubtedly one of the best sites in Sabah to see the lowland bird species, many of which are endemic to Borneo or to the Sunda region. In this article Dave Showler describes some of the species that are likely to be encountered along the excellent trail system accessible from the Danum Valley Field Centre.

The Danum Valley Conservation Area covers 438 km² and is located on the western side of the upper reaches of the Segama River about 70 km to the east of Lahad Datu, the nearest town. (Figure 1). The area is mostly primary lowland dipterocarp rain forest but small areas of hill forest, also dominated by dipterocarp tree species, occur on the higher ridges between 600 m and 1,000 m and on the Conservation Area's highest point, Gunung Danum (1,093 m).

The Conservation Area is part of a larger zone (c. 10,000 km²) comprising the Sabah Foundation forest concession. The Foundation's objective is to produce timber for the benefit of Sabah's economy, so the forest surrounding the Conservation Area has either already been logged or is scheduled for logging during the next few years. A 'Conservation Area' is designated in recognition of outstanding wildlife value, but in reality this category affords little protection.

Fortunately, the situation at Danum Valley is not so bleak because of the presence of the Danum Valley Field Centre. Established in 1986, and managed by the Sabah Foundation, it houses and provides research facilities for resident and visiting scientists engaged in the study of the forest. Visitors to Danum are able to stay at the field centre, but accommodation should be booked in advance as it is limited. Resthouse accommodation is available at M\$45 per person and the hostel at M\$30. Camping used to be a cheap alternative but prices have recently been raised to M\$25 as facilities at the campsite have been improved. Meals can be provided at M\$30 a day but you can do your own cooking in the kitchen next to the hostel, as long as you bring in all your own food. If you require more provisions during your stay, one of the staff will buy what you require on their next visit to Lahad Datu.

Access to Danum Valley is via Lahad Datu which can be reached from Kota Kinabalu either by plane (M\$91 single) or by bus (M\$25). A minibus leaves for Danum Valley at about 15h00 every Monday, Wednesday and Friday from the Sabah Foundation office at the Hapseng Building in Lahad Datu. The return fare is M\$60 and there is an entrance fee of M\$15 payable when you arrive. If you have your own vehicle you can make your own way to the field centre.

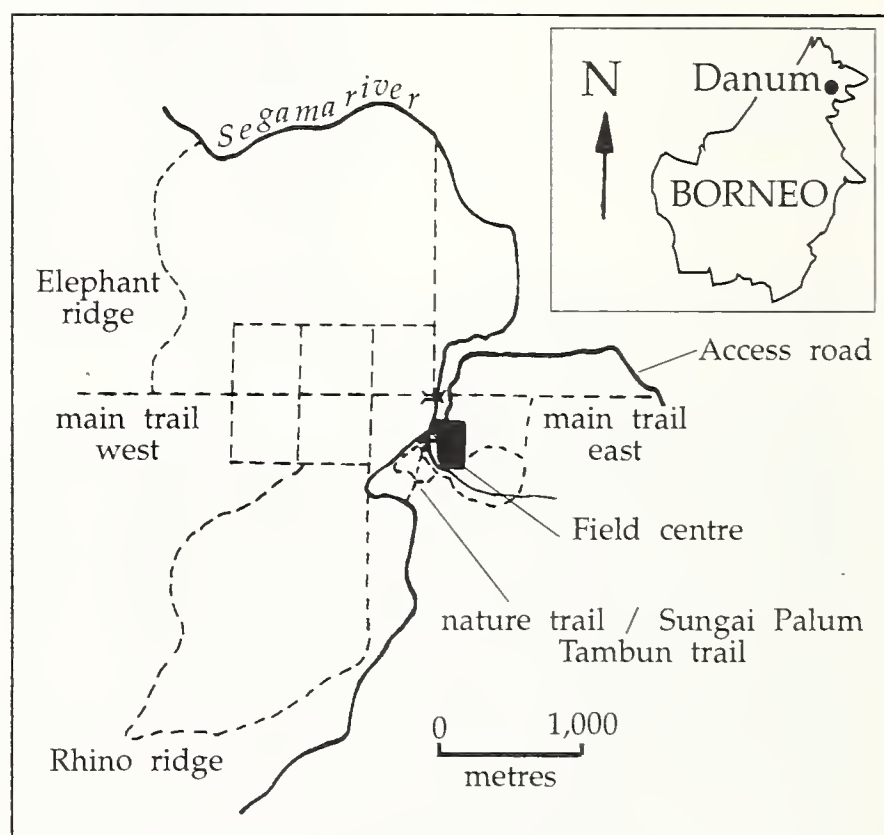


Figure 1. The Danum Valley Conservation Area

A 'Jungle Lodge' is being constructed to provide high standard accommodation for the growing number of eco-tourists. This is sited in the north of the Conservation Area close to the banks of the River Danum, a major tributary of the Segama. This is a further attempt at securing the future of the Danum Valley Conservation Area by generating income from visitors.

At least 235 bird species have been recorded at Danum, including 10 of Borneo's 35 endemics. There are also several other bird species that one has a good chance of seeing, and which are difficult to see elsewhere in South-East Asia.

The mammals occurring at Danum are equally inspiring. All of Sabah's 10 species of primate reside here, from the diminutive Western Tarsier *Tarsius bancanus* to the 'man of the forest', the Orang-Utan *Pongo pygmaeus* which, outside Borneo, is only present in northern Sumatra. Other mammals to look out for include tree-shrews, squirrels, flying squirrels, civets, deer, Asian Elephant *Elephas maximus*, Bearded Pig *Sus barbatus*, the scarce and rarely seen Sumatran Rhinoceros *Dicerorhinus sumatrensis*, Clouded Leopard *Neofelis nebulosa*, Flat-headed Cat *Felis planiceps*, and Leopard Cat *F. bengalensis*.

The trails, which are readily accessible from the field centre, and other interesting places in the general vicinity are described below.

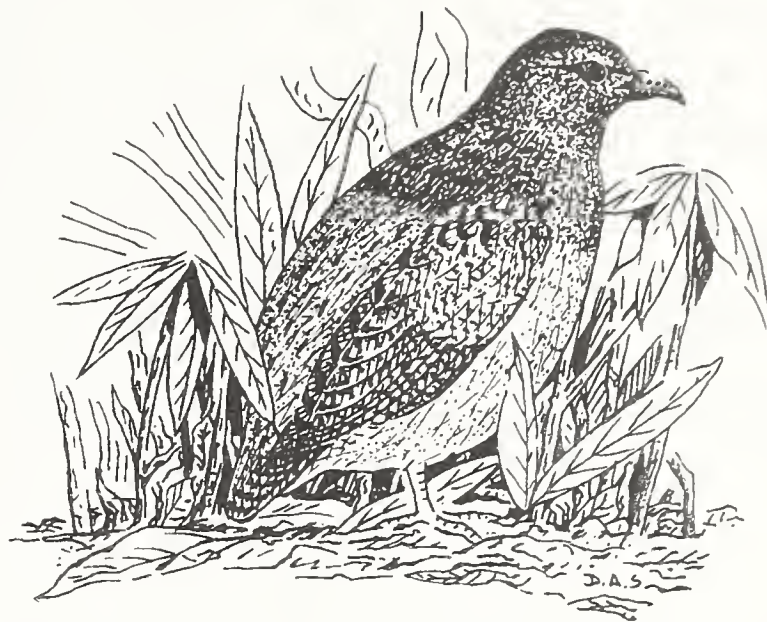
1. Around the Field Centre.

Even before reaching the field centre you will probably notice small flocks of the Dusky Munia *Lonchura fuscans* rising up from the secondary vegetation, and grasses along the roadside. This common species that is restricted to the farmland and grasslands of Borneo is about the only near-endemic to have benefitted from forest destruction.

A few kilometres to the north of the field centre there is a towerhide on a hillock by the roadside. This provides an excellent lookout point from which to observe hornbills, especially in the late afternoon and early evening. From here four of the seven species occurring at Danum are regularly seen, these being Rhinoceros *Buceros rhinoceros*, Bushy-crested *Anorrhinus galeritus*, Black *Anthracoceros malayanus* and the least obtrusive, Wrinkled Hornbill *Aceros corrugatus*.

Walking back along the road from the towerhide to the field centre at dusk can be rewarding. The tiny White-fronted Falconet *Microhierax latifrons*, a Bornean endemic, is often perched conspicuously high up on dead branches, singly or in pairs. In contrast, a Bat Hawk *Macheiramphus alcinus* may cruise powerfully overhead, but be careful not to confuse it with the dark race of the Peregrine Falcon *Falco peregrinus ernesti* which is recorded here, albeit rarely. As the day draws to a close

Swiftlets *Collocalia* spp., Silver-rumped Spinetails *Rhaphidura leucopygialis* and Brown-backed Needletails *Hirundapus giganteus* skim low over the water to drink.



Long-billed Partridge *Rhizothera longirostris* by Dave Showler

Watching from the footbridge over the Segama River it is possible to see Great-billed Herons *Ardea sumatrana*, which occasionally fly up or down the river, and every evening you are almost certain of having splendid views of Red Giant Flying Squirrels *Petaurista petaurista*, hoisting themselves up to their favoured take-off point high in a tree, before leaping off and gliding across the river into the forest.

Once darkness falls, Buffy Fish-Owls *Ketupa ketupu* come to feed on cicadas and large beetles that are attracted to the badminton court lights adjacent to the hostel. The deep resonant trilling call of a Large Frogmouth *Batrachostomus auritus* is audible at certain times of the year from the field centre, and this is probably one of the best localities in South-East Asia to observe this scarce and elusive species. A walk at night along the road armed with a powerful torch can also be interesting. Malay Civet *Viverra zibetha* and Common Palm Civet *Paradoxurus hermaphroditus* are frequently illuminated whilst on their nocturnal forays, and the inconspicuous Reddish Scops-Owl *Otus rufescens* and Javan Frogmouth *Batrachostomus javensis* can sometimes be pinpointed as they call from the low or mid canopy of the trees by the roadside. Scanning through the trees may reveal the Bornean endemic Thomas's Flying Squirrel *Aeromys thomasi*, which unlike its close relative the Red Giant, tends to emerge only after nightfall and not at dusk.

2. The Nature Trail and Sungai Palum Tambun Trail.

These trails are located just to the south of the field centre on the opposite bank of the Palum Tambun River. The river banks are frequented by many birds including Blue-eared *Alcedo meninting* and Blue-banded Kingfishers *A. euryzona*, Chestnut-naped Forktail *Enicurus ruficapillus*, White-chested Babbler *Trichastoma rostratum*, and Straw-headed Bulbul *Pycnonotus zeylanicus*. The Nature Trail provides a gentle introduction to the forest, the circuit being only 500 m long, with an additional 400 m loop, the Sungai Palum Tambun Trail and a short trail down to the Segama river.

Some of the species are more active, and thus easier to see in the early morning. This is especially true of the Chestnut-necklaced Partridge *Arborophila charltonii*, which often forages on the trails at first light. Two other galliformes, the Bornean race of Crested Fireback *Lophura ignita nobilis*, the male of which has a pale buff tail and orange-buff belly, and Crested Partridge *Rollulus rouloul* are common along these trails.



Large-billed Blue Flycatcher Cyornis caerulatus
Male. The commonest *Cyornis* flycatcher at
Danum Valley (Photo: F. Lambert).

In the forest clearings, wintering *Muscicapa* flycatchers such as Dark-sided *M. sibirica* hawk for insects. These open areas are also a favourite haunt of the endemic Yellow-rumped Flowerpecker *Prionochilus xanthopygius*, which often feeds on flowers and small arthropods in the mid-canopy. Small, slender flying lizards *Draco* spp. are fairly numerous, and males can be frequently seen flashing their brightly coloured gular and neck 'flags' to attract females and ward off rival males.

The tree platform constructed high up around the thick, columnar trunk of a massive *Shorea* should be scaled at least once as it offers a magnificent view of the forest canopy. The platform overlooks a nearby strangling fig *Ficus* sp. which, when in fruit proves irresistible to a host of frugivores, including various species of barbets, bulbuls and pigeons.



Bornean Wren-Babbler Ptilocichla leucogrammica
This species is readily identified by its disyllabic
whistle, which has a human-like quality (Photo: F.
Lambert).



Javan Frogmouth *Batrachostomus javensis*
Two interesting photographs showing both the upperparts and underparts. The photograph taken from above was taken at Danum Valley, the other individual was photographed at Khao Pra-Bang Kham Non-hunting Area in Thailand (Photos: P. Morris).



1 *Blue-headed Pitta* *Pitta baudii*
Adult male. The female is brick-red above with brown underparts and a blue tail as in the male (Photo: P. Morris).

3. The Main Trail and associated trails.

The Main Trail West starts on the west bank of the Segama and is reached by crossing the footbridge. The trail immediately enters primary forest within the Danum Valley Conservation Area. Along this and the smaller paths which lead from it the majority of the birds present at Danum can be seen. The Main Trail East is usually less rewarding, going through secondary forest and holding less of the forest specialists.

The Main Trail West runs due west for 2.1 km where it meets the Elephant Ridge trail, which branches off northwards. The main trail is not worthwhile following after this point as birding tends to be better near to the rivers. Along the first 1.5 km of the Main Trail West, other trails spaced at regular 100 m intervals head off north and south, and these are in turn crossed by other paths which run east-west forming a grid system of paths. The main intersections are indicated with a marker post, aiding orientation in the forest, but people still manage to get lost there. As with all forest birding, it is advisable to carry a compass and whistle. In a few sections of the grid, there are research plots, where important scientific studies are in progress and visitors are requested not to enter.

Great Argus *Argusianus argus* are regularly seen on the Main Trail West and several display grounds are located in the general vicinity of the trail. The males can be quite confiding, standing out in the open watching the observer before slipping out of view into the understorey vegetation. Chestnut-necklaced Partridge, and Long-billed Partridge *Rhizothera longirostris* also occur; the latter was recorded at Danum Valley only recently, and was a new addition to the Sabah bird list (see *From the field* this issue).

The pittas are very well represented, with five species being resident; Blue-headed *Pitta baudii* and Blue-banded Pitta *P. arcuata* (both Bornean endemics), Black-crowned *P. venusta*, Banded *P. guajana* and Giant Pittas *P. caerulea*. Two further species, the Hooded *P. sordida* and Blue-winged Pitta *P. moluccensis* are winter visitors. The Blue-headed Pitta is widespread and quite common in the forest at Danum, the gaudy males being much more often observed than the rather retiring and subtly-coloured females. The Blue-banded Pitta is far more restricted and elusive, inhabiting the hill forest areas (see the Rhino Ridge trail described below).

The Black-crowned Pitta is undoubtedly the most common pitta of the lowland forest. An imitation of their whistled call (extremely similar to that of Garnet Pitta *P. granatina*), can sometimes lure a bird out of the undergrowth and into view, and it is also possible to approach calling birds. Whilst delivering their plaintive ventriloquial whistle from a low perch they lower their crimson belly taking up a pear-shaped posture.



Blue-banded Pitta *Pitta arcuata*
by Dave Showler

The distinctive Bornean race of Banded Pitta is fairly numerous. The sexes are quite similar, but the males have a small dark blue belly patch unlike those of the Thai-Malay Peninsula which have a much larger extent of dark iridescent blue on the belly and breast. In both sexes of the race the supercilium is a uniform dark yellow with no flame-orange coloration towards the rear of the supercilium.

Danum Valley is also a good place to see the enigmatic Giant Pitta *P. caerulea* but, even here, they are difficult to observe. This species can move remarkably quickly through the undergrowth and take bounding leaps across the forest floor.

Another group of birds well represented at Danum is the babblers, with 23 species being recorded. Many species are prominent birds of the understorey and noisy mixed feeding flocks, often accompanied by Spotted Fantails *Rhipidura perlata*, are frequently encountered. However, the two Bornean endemic lowland wren-babblers (there is also a montane species) tend to occur singly, in pairs, or in family groups. The Black-throated Wren-Babbler *Napothera atrigularis* behaves similarly to the extralimital Large Wren-Babbler *N. macrodactyla* rummaging in the leaf-litter, and tossing leaves about. The scaly-breasted Bornean Wren-Babbler *Ptilocichla leucogrammica* is rather retiring but can be seen and forages in gulleys with a dense understorey.

Large-billed Blue *Cyornis caerulatus* and Bornean Blue-Flycatchers *C. superbus* feed along the forest trails. Many other birds are also regularly seen, including Hodgson's Hawk-Cuckoo *Cuculus fugax*, Diard's Trogon *Harpactes diardii*, Finsch's Bulbul *Alophoxius finschii*, Banded *Lacedo pulchella* and Rufous-collared Kingfishers, the endemic White-crowned Shama *Copsychus stricklandii*, Malaysian Honeyguide *Indicator archipelagicus* and the Crested Jay *Platylophus galericulatus*.



Bornean Wren-Babbler *Ptilocichla leucogrammica* by Craig Robson

The Bornean Bristlehead *Pityriasis gymnocephala* is less forthcoming, and even when its strange array of whining and sometimes soft and pitiful calls are heard, it can still be difficult to locate. They tend to go around in small flocks of about four or five birds, moving slowly through the mid-canopy and uttering their strange vocabulary from densely foliated trees. They are stocky robust birds and fly quickly between trees.

Amongst the other fauna Red Leaf Monkeys *Presbytis rubicunda* can be seen daily along these trails and there is a reasonable chance of coming across an Orang-Utan. The extremely rare and little known Bay Cat *Felis badia* has also been seen twice this year in this part of the forest. Occasionally, the Asian Brown Tortoise *Manouria emys* is seen as it lumbers across a trail.

4. Rhino Ridge Trail.

Rhino Ridge is reached via the Main Trail West. It follows a ridge south before looping back north-

wards and rejoining the main trail at the 1 km marker post. Rhino Ridge is only about 7 km in length but a whole day can easily be spent along it. Some sections are quite steep, especially where the ridge rises up into the hill forest, making walking and birding quite difficult. However, the bird species found along this trail make it well worth the effort, being the most likely area that one might encounter Bulwer's Pheasant *Lophura bulweri*, which is endemic to Borneo. The species occurs at only a very low density at Danum Valley and is seldom seen. Little is known about it and the first known nest in the wild was discovered in Brunei only in 1985.

The manic laughing call of the Helmeted Hornbill *Buceros vigil* is one of the most noticeable sounds along the trail. An equally distinctive but little-heard cuckoo-like call belongs to the White-crowned Hornbill *Aceros comatus* which may also be encountered there. Unlike other hornbills, which are usually high up in the tree canopy, this species frequently works its way through the low canopy in search of food.

Special attention should be paid to the bamboo thickets along the trail as this is the preferred habitat of the Blue-banded Pitta. Like its close relative the Black-crowned Pitta, if it is calling a whistled imitation may draw it out of cover.

Other species regularly seen along Rhino Ridge include Banded Broadbill *Eurylaimus javanicus*, the rather skulking Temminck's Babbler *Pellorneum pyrogenys*, wintering Narcissus Flycatcher *Ficedula narcissina* and resident Rufous-chested Flycatcher *F. dumetoria* and Rufous-tailed Jungle-Flycatcher *Rhinomyias ruficauda*, Bornean Bristlehead and the all black race of the Black Magpie *Platysmurus leucopterus aterrimus*.

Rhino Ridge is excellent for mammals although contrary to the name of the trail the Sumatran Rhinoceros is almost never seen here. There is a good chance of seeing Orang-Utan, Bornean Gibbon *Hylobates muelleri*, Giant Squirrel *Ratufa affinis*, Bearded Pig and Bornean Yellow Muntjac *Muntiacus atherodes*.

Birdwatching in Sabah.

If you are planning a birding trip to Sabah and require further information please don't hesitate to contact me.

Dave A. Showler, 30 Essex Street, Norwich, NR2 2BL, U.K..

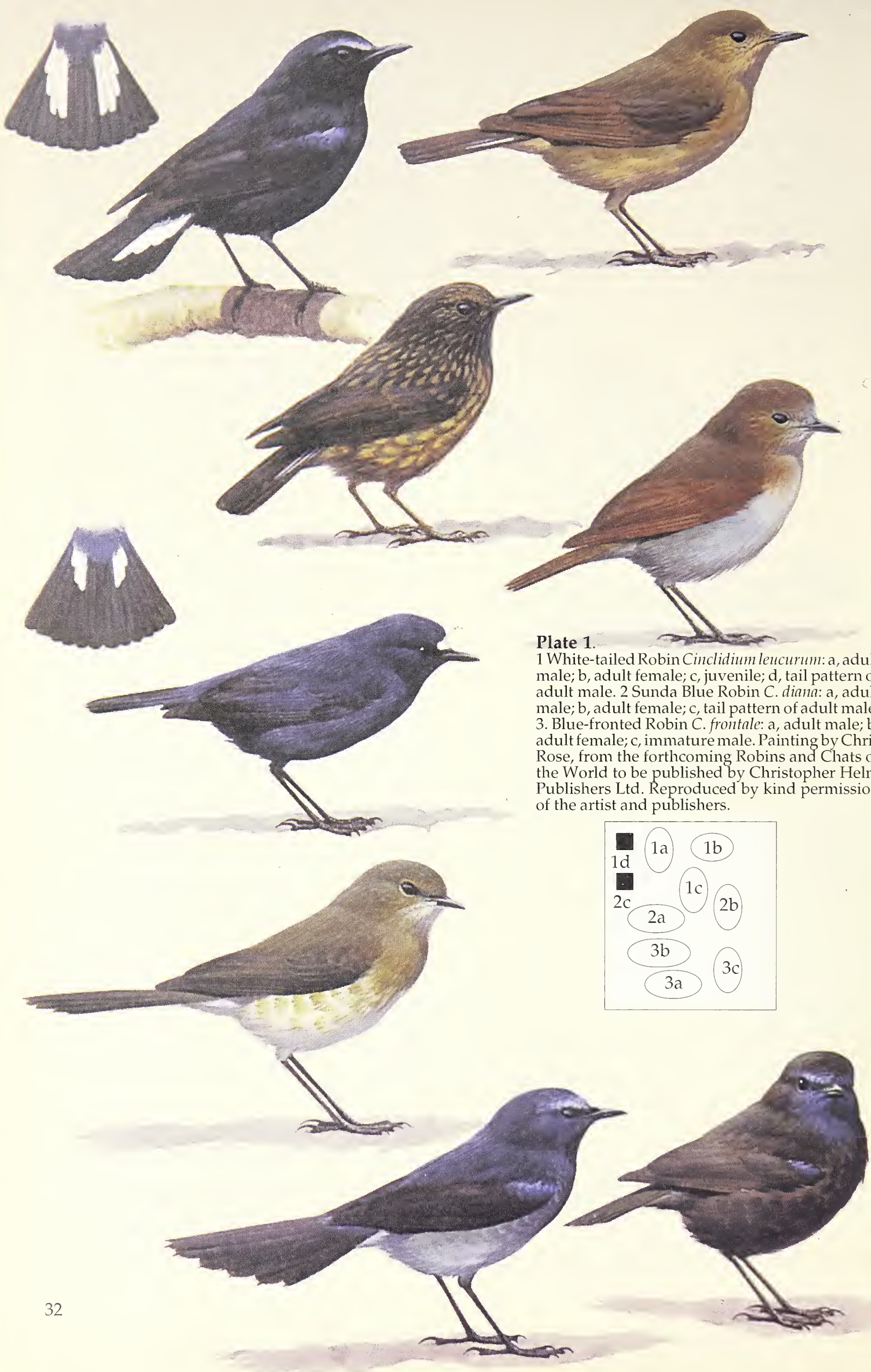
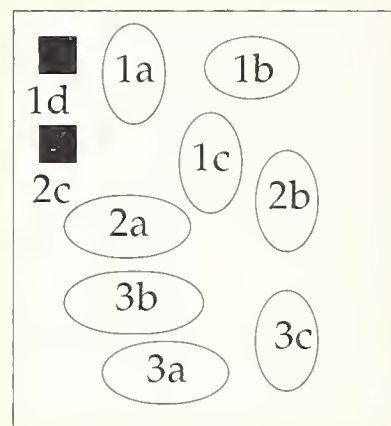


Plate 1.

1 White-tailed Robin *Cinclidium leucurum*: a, adult male; b, adult female; c, juvenile; d, tail pattern of adult male. 2 Sunda Blue Robin *C. diana*: a, adult male; b, adult female; c, tail pattern of adult male. 3. Blue-fronted Robin *C. frontale*: a, adult male; b, adult female; c, immature male. Painting by Chris Rose, from the forthcoming Robins and Chats of the World to be published by Christopher Helm Publishers Ltd. Reproduced by kind permission of the artist and publishers.



Little-known bird

Blue-fronted Robin



The Blue-fronted Robin has seldom been observed in the field, yet it has been recorded in countries as wide-ranging as China, India, Laos, Thailand and Viet Nam. In this article the author documents the available information on the species and gives useful hints on its identification from other species, especially the White-tailed Robin.

The genus *Cinclidium* comprises just three species of rather shy robins, all of which are superficially similar being mainly dark blue in colour and inhabiting the undergrowth of montane and submontane forests in southern Asia. The most widespread and familiar species is the White-tailed Robin *C. leucurum* which occurs from southern China and throughout most of mainland South-East Asia²⁶. The Sunda Robin *C. diana* is confined to Sumatra and Java, where it occurs throughout the mountain ranges but is considered to be scarce or rare^{19, 20}. The third species, Blue-fronted Robin *C. frontale*, is the least known and most enigmatic of the three species, occurring in two apparently disjunct populations.

The Blue-fronted Robin was described by Blyth from Sikkim in 1842⁴. In 1843 a coloured illustration was published and it was noted that 'the bird is reported to be a fine songster, heard chiefly in the evening', indicating some familiarity with the species in the field⁵. However, Jerdon¹⁶ believed that some other bird was perhaps intended because the species was 'too rare for anything to be known of it'.

A number of specimens were collected in the last century from Sikkim and Darjeeling^{6, 14} including a series of 13 males (January - May) and two females (August, December) collected 1873-78²⁷. This series is held at the British Museum (Tring) and the birds were all from Sikkim, although the label data are too imprecise to determine the exact localities. In the present century there have been just a handful of records, but from a number of widely scattered localities. There have been no further records from Sikkim¹, despite several expeditions there, but a male was obtained by Inglis on 7 July 1904 at Jore Pokhari, Darjeeling district (2,340 m)^{21, 27}. Ali and Ripley (per R. A. Paynter) list a record of a bird collected at Palmajua, about 5 km north-east of Tonglo, Darjeeling district (2,250 m) in June (year not stated)².

In 1930 a new subspecies, *C. f. orientale*, was described from Cha Pa in north-west Tonkin, Viet Nam^{10, 12}, and a female collected from Xieng-Khouang in northern Laos on 5 January 1926¹¹ was subsequently assigned to this race. A single male of the same subspecies was collected in Chiang Mai province, northern Thailand in 1965, and this remains the only confirmed record for Thailand^{7, 24}, although there has since been at least one unsubstantiated sight record from north-west Thailand. More recently Blue-fronted Robin has been found at two localities in Sichuan province, China: one was collected on 1 May 1955 at Shimian^{9, 28}. This bird was also subsequently assigned to the race *orientale*⁹, although Meyer de Schauensee mistakenly assigned it to the nominate race²². In May 1986, one Blue-fronted Robin was seen and another four were heard, at Dafengding Panda Reserve, Mabian county, Sichuan (2,100-2,300 m)¹⁷.

The first Indian subcontinent record since 1904 came on 17 March 1979 when a single male was collected in the upper Noa Dihing valley in Arunachal Pradesh at an altitude of 800 m²⁴. Another male was collected in the same area in February 1988 at an altitude of 1,350 m²⁴. Both specimens were considered to belong to the race *orientale*, and the authors concluded that *frontale* occurs west of the Brahmaputra River, and *orientale* to the east.

Blue-fronted Robin has not been definitely recorded from Nepal, although it seems certain that it occurred there, at least formerly. Two specimens were collected by Hodgson which, although stated to have come from Nepal by some authors^{14, 23, 25} may have originated in India¹⁵. A bird, probably of this species, was heard by B. King on Phulchowki in the Kathmandu valley, central Nepal in April 1979¹⁵.

The few other recent records have been from the Darjeeling area or from Lava (= Labha) near Kalimpong in northern west Bengal, and these

would undoubtedly belong to the nominate race. A recent unpublished report from the Darjeeling area was apparently near Batasi. Lava (2,050 m) has provided more recent records of the species than any other locality with at least three reports in the last few years: a single male was observed in April 1986¹³, another male was seen in April 1990⁸ and a single male was seen by a Birdquest group led by the author in March 1992.

Figure 1 shows the localities of all the known records of Blue-fronted Robin. It is surprising that the species has apparently not been recorded in Myanmar and it surely must occur there as the Noa Dihing valley in Arunachal Pradesh is close to the border between India and Myanmar. Similarly, the species has not yet been reported from Bhutan although Lava is close to the Bhutanese border. It will surely be found in this little-known country in the future.

Although the records of Blue-fronted Robin have come from a number of widely scattered localities, in all of which it is sympatric with White-tailed Robin, it is clearly considerably less common than the latter. Undoubtedly its retiring habits have contributed to this apparent scarcity and, in addition, much of its range has, until recently, been inaccessible to ornithologists. Nevertheless, it would appear that the species does genuinely occur in lower densities. With birders now reaching more areas within its range, and now that its song has been recorded on tape (¹⁷, P. Morris pers. comm.), the species will surely be found in other localities in the future.

Males of the three *Cinclidium* species are not difficult to distinguish to the experienced eye but the brown females are more difficult and, being generally shyer than the males, are less well known (Plate 1). Males of Blue-fronted and White-tailed Robin are mainly dark blue with shining blue shoulders, foreheads and short supercilia. Some authors have stated that the shining blue areas are brighter in White-tailed Robin^{7,18}, but this is not a useful feature in the field. The white patches at the base of the tail of the White-tailed Robin are diagnostic, but can be difficult to see, and may be visible only in flight.

Stevens considered that the lack of white in the tail was the only reliable way to separate the Blue-fronted and White-tailed Robin from each other²⁷, but from my own observations of a male at Lava in March 1992 I would suggest several better features. The general impression is of a larger and longer-

legged bird, and the whitish belly is distinctive, though this may be difficult to see in the darker recesses of a gully. Blue-fronted Robin also lacks the small white patches on the sides of the neck, but these are invisible on many White-tailed Robins. By far the most obvious and characteristic feature of Blue-fronted Robin is the shape of the tail, which is considerably longer than that of White-tailed Robin and distinctly graduated.

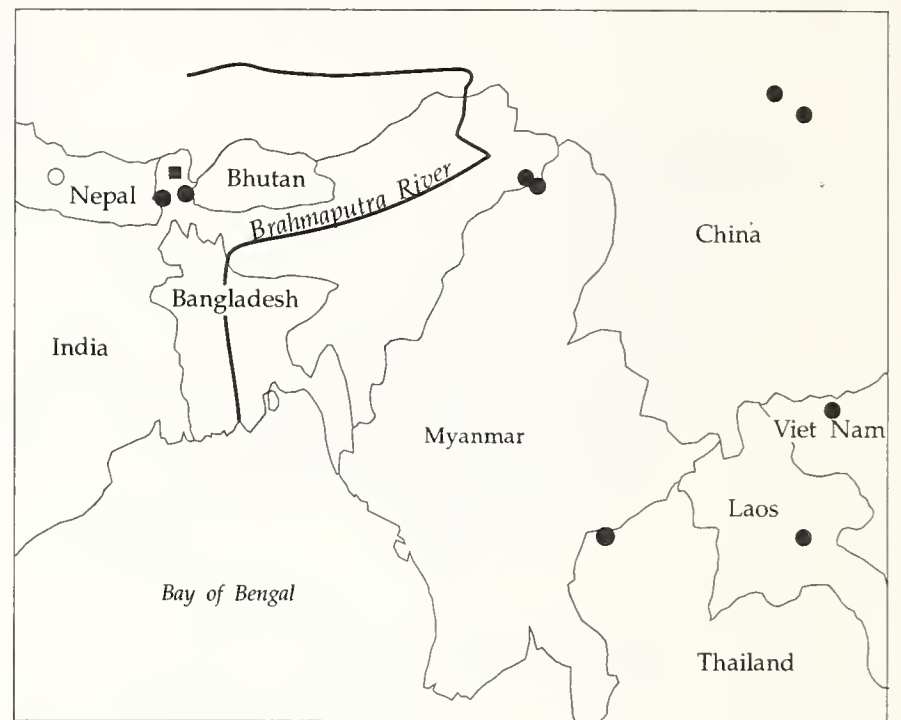


Figure 1. map showing localities of all known records of Blue-fronted Robin *Cinclidium frontale*. Filled circles represent confirmed records since 1900; open circle represents an unconfirmed record; filled square represents the approximate location of a pre-1900 records.

White-browed Shortwing *Brachypteryx montana* is a potential confusion species but it is more likely to be confused with White-tailed Robin. Large Niltava *Niltava grandis* exhibits similar plumage features to Blue-fronted Robin, but is brighter blue with a dark belly and has a bright blue rump and small, bright blue patches on the sides of the neck. Its shorter, ungraduated tail and more arboreal habits should easily prevent confusion.

The female Blue-fronted Robin is very poorly known; there are few museum specimens and it may never have been studied in the field. Although on plumage it might be mistaken for a number of species, its habits and shape, particularly the tail, should facilitate identification. The plumage differences between the males of the two races of Blue-fronted Robin are slight. Nominate *frontale* differs in having a brownish wash on the abdomen, highlighted by 'whitish on the centre abdomen and undertail coverts'^{3,24}.

Blue-fronted Robin appears to favour dark, densely vegetated gullies in primary montane forest, and the few observations of it in the field indicate that it is very shy. It was therefore surprising to find a single male of the species inhabiting a spinach crop in a small garden on the outskirts of Lava in March 1992. The bird was never seen in the crop itself and was only found when accidentally flushed out by a villager. When disturbed in this way it would invariably perch briefly on the lowest twig of a 'wicker' fence before diving down into an adjacent, thickly vegetated gully. However, it always quickly returned, perching again on the fence, or occasionally on the ground, before disappearing into the crop. When perched on the fence it stood crosswise in a horizontal stance, slowly fanning its tail to show its characteristic graduated shape. Its flight was quick, although a little jerky, and the bird appeared to be reluctant to fly long distances. It always kept low in flight, looking somewhat hunch-backed, with the rounded tail very obvious at all times.

In the eastern Himalayas Ali gives the altitude range of the species as 1,800-3,000 m¹, presumably based on the old specimens from Sikkim, but none of the subsequent records has exceeded 2,250 m. If, as seems likely, the species has a fairly narrow altitudinal range this might also help to explain the scarcity of the species. The eastern race *orientale* appears to occur at somewhat lower altitudes with one of the Arunachal Pradesh birds being found as low as 800 m, though this may have been a bird which had wintered at lower altitude. It is not known if the species routinely undertakes any altitudinal movements outside the breeding season because virtually all of the records to date fall between February and July. If Blue-fronted Robins do leave the breeding grounds to spend the winter months at lower altitudes, they have yet to be discovered.

Acknowledgements

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Black-necked Cranes wintering in Bhutan

In this article, Col R.T.Chacko (Retd) reports on the study that he conducted during October 1991 to April 1992 on Black-necked Cranes wintering in Bhutan. His findings include a migration route along the course of the Kuri Chu, a number of previously unknown roosting and staging sites and the need to continue monitoring the wintering population in Bhutan. The study was sponsored by the OBC and the Forestry Department of the Royal Government of Bhutan.

The Black-necked Crane *Grus nigricollis* was the last of the 15 species of cranes to be discovered in 1876 by the Russian naturalist and explorer Przewalski, near Lake Koko Nor in what is now the Qinghai province of north-east Tibet. The Black-necked Cranes breed and spend the summer months in China, Ladakh (India), and Tibet. They pass the winter in Bhutan and the southern parts of China and Tibet.

Observations of the wintering population of Black-necked Cranes in Bhutan have been made since 1978 at several feeding and roosting areas. Periodic censuses of these known sites indicated that crane numbers were decreasing, probably as a result of human disturbance. There have also been unconfirmed reports of the species from other parts of Bhutan. However, little information existed on the ecology of the species and aspects of its migration such as the routes or staging areas chosen. This study was initiated in Bhutan to gather information primarily on the effects of human activities on the Black-necked Crane and its habitat.

Black-necked Cranes arrive in Bhutan during the last week of October, depending on the weather over the Himalayas. The cranes migrate to and from Bhutan in small groups of two or three pairs. One to two pairs or family groups arrive first in Phobjikha and Bumdiling (Figure 1).

The species winters in discrete areas in western, central and eastern Bhutan (Table 1). The study discovered that Black-necked Cranes wintering in eastern Bhutan follow the course of the Kuri Chu river during their southward migration and on their return trip to the breeding grounds at the end of winter. Some crane flocks with juveniles were seen using Dungkhar and Thangmachu on the Kuri Chu river as staging areas during the southward migration, but these sites were not used on the northward journey.

Visits were made to all the known and reported feeding and roosting areas of the crane¹. The total number of adult and juvenile cranes were counted at roosting areas as they came in the evening, and the following morning when they left. Local Forestry staff and volunteers counted the birds

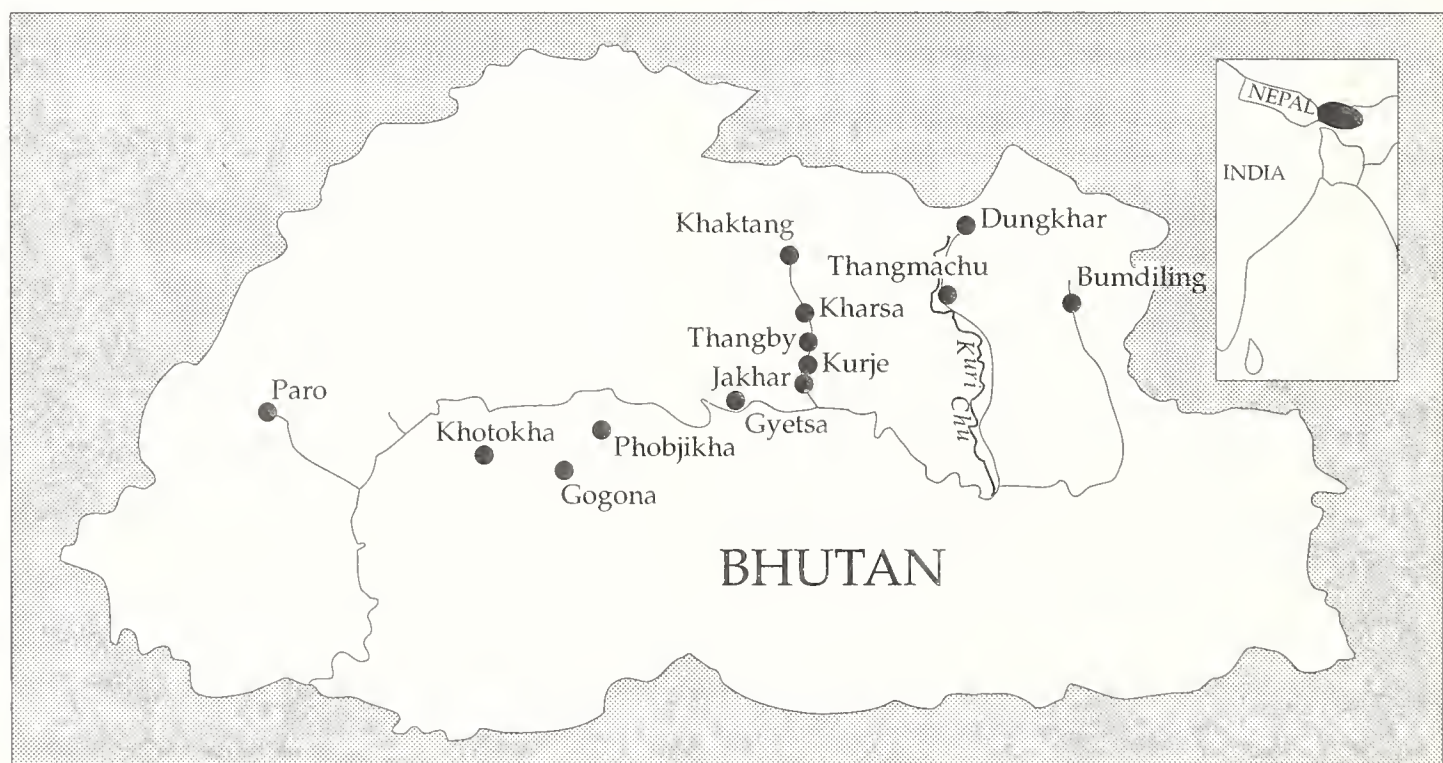


Figure 1. Map of Bhutan showing the localities mentioned in the text.

from different hides and, even in large flocks, their counts were always within one bird of the survey team's estimate. The counts at the roosting sites are shown in Table 2.

The birds daily routine, feeding habits and movements were studied. The cranes usually left the roosting areas at 0730 hrs. At the feeding areas, the cranes appeared to eat grains, insects, molluscs, and plant tubers. The birds tended to stop foraging by late morning and during these rest periods, the juveniles sat down whilst the adults preened or stood on one leg, with one of the adults keeping vigilance. The birds spent most of the afternoon foraging and returned to the roost after 1700 hrs.

Returning cranes were normally guided back to the roosting area by the calls of an elderly pair that often stayed at the roost site. The loud calls in unison of the elderly pair guided the returning cranes like an air traffic controller guiding aircraft to land. The reply calls from returning cranes could be heard well before they were seen, and it was a beautiful sight to see a group break out of the clouds, lose height rapidly and alight at the roost site.

Western Bhutan	altitude (m)	
Khotokha	2,720	new roosting area
Gogona	3,050	feeding area
Samtegang	2,400	past roosting
Phobjikha	3,000	roosting area
Central Bhutan		
Gyetsa	2,750	new roosting area
Jakhar - Kurje	2,650	past roosting area
Thangby - Kharsa	2,750	new roosting area
Kharsa - Khaktang	2,870	feeding area
Eastern Bhutan		
Thangmachu	1,770	staging area discovered
Dungkhar	2,800	staging area discovered
Bumdiling	1,950	roosting area

Table 1. Summary of locations visited during the study

Unusually, the small group using the Khotokha, Gyetsa and Thangby valleys roosted on marshy slopes which were well hidden by pine trees. The cranes always arrived quietly at these sites and they remained silent during nightfall. In Bumdiling when there was heavy ground frost and the water was frozen everywhere except the Kolong Chu river, the cranes were seen roosting in a line on a bend in the river where the water was shallow.

Interestingly, at Phobjikha during mornings when there was hardly any wind, four to six pairs

would walk up a small incline 20 to 25 m high and jump into the wind to take off, like a hang glider. The birds could gain height in this way with minimum effort.

	Total	Juv.	% juv.
Bumdiling	160	26	16.1
Gyetsa and Thangby	13	5	33.4
Khotakha	10	2	20.0
Phobjikha	133	22	16.5
TOTAL	316	55	17.4

Table 2. The numbers of Black-necked Cranes with proportion of juveniles identified in the roosting sites.

The population of Black-necked Cranes wintering in Bhutan is decreasing mainly because of drainage of the marshy habitat that they depend on for pasture land. Also, under traditional farming regimes, fallen grain from the harvest in October would remain undisturbed in the fields until April the following year, providing plenty of food for the cranes. Now, the arrival of mechanised farming, and the practice of ploughing during winter months means that feeding areas are becoming more restricted.

There are other problems facing the cranes. Recently barbed wire fences have been introduced in some areas around fields in place of the traditional pinewood stakes and scantlings. The traditional fences were clearly visible from a distance, but the barbed wire fences are not. This problem has resulted in wing damage to several cranes at Phobjikha and Bumdiling, especially as they take off.

With improved road communications and the publicity given to the Black-necked Cranes and their roosting areas, the number of tourists to Phobjikha and Bumdiling is increasing. Many disturb the cranes, intentionally or otherwise, as they try to have a closer look or to take better photographs.

The full winter study has given a better understanding of the Black-necked Cranes wintering in Bhutan. A number of new feeding and roosting areas were discovered, and it is likely that there are still other areas in Bhutan that are used by the cranes. There are plenty of things that we do not know about the cranes and further studies are needed to provide more extensive data to give a complete picture. For instance we do not know the migration routes of the western and central Bhu-



Figure 2 Black-necked Crane *Grus nigricollis*. (Photo: John Holmes).

tan flocks and it is not clear where the birds which winter in Bhutan spend the summer.

The Black-necked Crane has wintered in Bhutan for generations and has found a place in local folklore and the sentiments of the people. This study, however, indicated that their future in Bhutan is being threatened. While the birds themselves are not normally disturbed, because of local religion and tradition, there are visible signs of encroachment and destruction of their habitat, at times unintentional. Cranes have already disappeared from some areas like the Jakhar valley in Central Bhutan and their numbers are decreasing in the nearby valleys. Immediate and coordinated action by the Royal Government and Non-Governmental Organisations is needed if we are to ensure that future generations will be able to see the cranes in their natural habitat. Following this

study a number of suggested measures which could be taken to protect the species have been forwarded to the Royal Government of Bhutan.

Acknowledgments

I am very grateful for support from the Oriental Bird Club, Forestry Department, Royal Government of Bhutan, and the friendly and ever smiling women, men and children of Bhutan who contributed to the successful completion of this tough study. My grateful thanks to Gita, my wife, George and Susan our children and Mary Philip for their encouragement, unstinted support and timely help to undertake and complete this study.

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Colonial breeding of the Brown-headed Gull and the Relict Gull from the Ordos highlands of Inner Mongolia, China.

This summer, during field work on the breeding colony of the Relict Gull *Larus relictus* at the Tao-limiao-Alashan Nur (see *OBC Bull.* 14 for location and site description), a number of Brown-headed Gulls *Larus brunnicephalus* arrived and then stayed to breed. A total of six pairs of Brown-headed Gulls nested, and all were located on islets that hold the main Relict Gulls colonies (Figure 1). This is the first known occurrence of the two species breeding side by side. The record also constitutes the first record of Brown-headed Gull breeding and summering in Ordos, being known previously only as a passage migrant.

The nests of the Brown-headed Gull are cup-shaped, and made from *Potamogeton* stems, with a lining of feathers. Compared to the Relict Gull nests they are finer in construction and cleaner, without excrement on the outside of the cup.

The average measurements, based on five of the Brown-headed Gull nests, were: 374 mm (350-390) for the outer diameter; 180 mm (155-190) for the inner diameter; 77 mm (70-90) for the height; and, 73 mm (65-95) for the depth.

The clutch size was two to three eggs (three eggs in four of the nests and two eggs in two nests). The egg shell was rather smooth, and pale green, dark yellow, or light olive in colour, and with heavy mottling. The average weight for 14 eggs was 52.9 g (50-59) and the mean dimensions were 59.3 mm (55.9-63.5) X 42.0 mm (40.2-45.7). By 5 July, all 16 of the Brown-headed Gull eggs had hatched.

The Brown-headed Gull nestlings were dark yellow with light black spots on their upper parts. The iris is blue-green, and the bill blood red. The newly-hatched young weighed about 50 g and developed quickly.

It is interesting that the nesting Brown-headed Gulls did not initiate their own separate colony but nested in the three well established Relict Gulls colonies. The shortest distance between the nests of a Brown-headed Gull and a Relict Gull was 38 cm and between Brown-headed Gulls it was about 11 cm.

Little aggression was observed between Relict and Brown-headed Gulls nesting in the same colony. Indeed, Relict Gulls showed more tolerance to those Brown-headed Gulls breeding in the same colony than to other Relict Gulls straying from other colonies. When the eggs hatched, the Brown-headed Gulls raised the young away from the Relict Gulls, and no evidence of hybridising was observed during the field work.

It is likely that the Brown-headed Gull is undergoing a range expansion as we made several other observations of the species this summer. On 24 and 25 June we observed 7 and 14 birds at Hadatau Nur (39° 24' N 109° 22' E) and Boerjiang Nur (39° 55' N 109° 39' E) respectively, and on 3 July at Hongjian Nur (39° 06' N 109° 54' E), we counted a non-breeding flock of 266 birds around the lake.



Figure 1. Relict Gull and Brown-headed Gull nesting colony

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Finding birds in Taiwan

Taiwan has a rich avifauna of resident species similar in composition to mainland east Asia, and during different seasons a host of wintering, summering or passage birds. There are also about 14 endemic species to the island and several "relict" species that are disjunct from the main part of their range. In this article Mark Brazil gives an insight into some of the best birdwatching sites in Taiwan, especially those for the island's endemic species.

Taiwan lies 160 km off the south-east coast of China between Japan and the Philippines, and is about 400 km from north to south and 150 km from east to west. A mountain range, biased slightly towards the eastern coast, forms the spine of the island with more than 15 peaks over 3,000 m, and Yushan being the highest at 3,998 m. The mountains fall steeply to the coast in the east and gently to a wide, heavily developed and densely populated agricultural plain to the west, down which run the main trunk routes by road and rail. The Tropic of Cancer passes through the southern part of the island and the climate is decidedly tropical, though in the mountains it can of course be cool even in summer, and in winter be prepared for cold weather and snow.

The avifauna of Taiwan is related to east Asian species, but includes about 14-16 species endemic to the island and also a number of relict species now well isolated from the rest of their range. The Taiwanese bird list stands at an impressive 450 species (see the new *Guide to the wild birds of Taiwan*¹⁰; reviewed this issue), partly as a result of Taiwan being situated astride one wing of the east Asian flyway. The potential for migrants, scarcities, and even vagrants is very good and may rank alongside the islands of the Sea of Japan^{1,5}, but this aspect of the island's ornithology is still not well known. However, increased activity by local birders in recent years has led to a steady addition of Asian rarities and 'Nearctic' waterfowl and shorebirds mirroring very much the pattern in Japan of previous decades³. I have found the southern tip of Taiwan, and the small island of Lanyu⁴ off south-east Taiwan to be of interest for migrants, and no doubt other sites will become better known in years to come.

At just under 36,000 sq km Taiwan is smaller than Kyushu (Japan's southern main island) and about half the size of Sri Lanka, and with a population estimated at 20 million. It is therefore of a manageable size for a birding trip of one to three

weeks, during which one should expect to see 80-150 species.

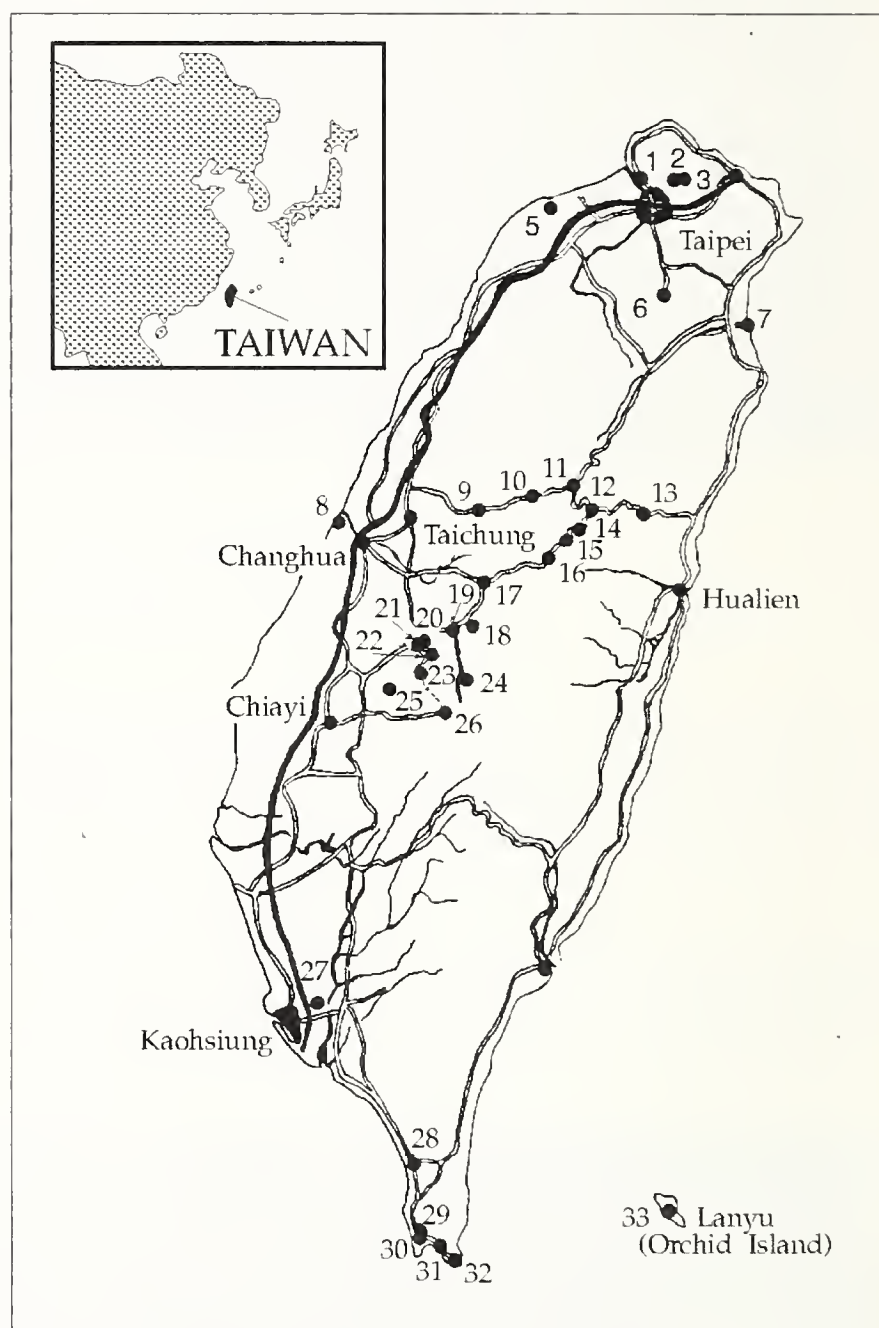


Figure 1. Taiwan

Numbers refer to the following places :

1 Kuantu; 2 Yang Ming Shan; 3 Chih Hsing Shan; 4 Keelung Harbour; 5 Chiang Kai Sek Airport; 6 Wulai; 7 Lanyang Shi; 8 Tatu River; 9 Kukuan; 10 Tech; 11 Lishan; 12 Tayuling; 13 Tienhsiang; 14 Son Shwe Lou; 15 Zwefong; 16 Wushe; 17 Puli; 18 Sun Moon Lake; 19 Shuili; 20 Chung Tee; 21 Luku; 22 Chitou; 23 Shan Lin Chi; 24 Wan Hsiang; 25 Why Phu; 26 Alishan; 27 Cheng Ching Lake; 28 Feng Kang; 29 Hengchun; 30 Lung Luan Lake; 31 Kenting Park; 32 Oluanpi; 33 Lanyu

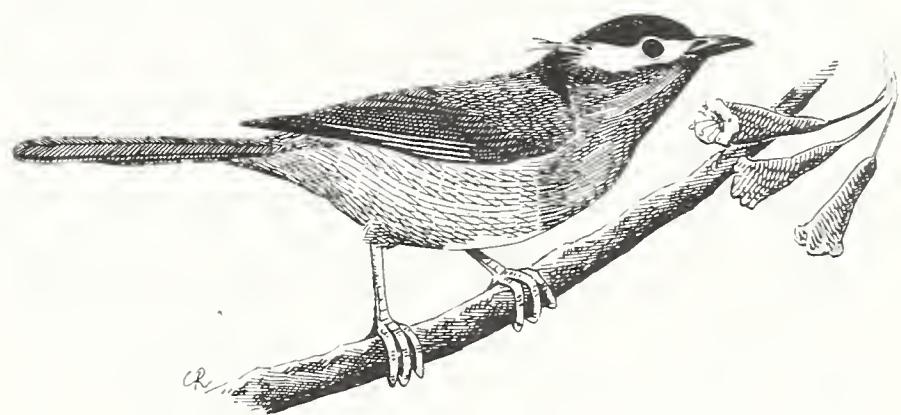
Within Taiwan travel is relatively straightforward. There is an efficient trunk-line train service, an excellent network of express and local buses going just about everywhere, rental cars are available from the airport, the tourist office puts out plenty of leaflets in English, there is a Lonely Planet travel guide devoted to the island, two trip reports^{8,9} and now there is a new field guide¹⁰. The main difficulty facing the foreign traveller is the language, only Chinese being spoken widely outside of the major cities.

Birding in Taiwan is interesting at almost any time of year and can be combined with a visit to Hong Kong and Japan. With the wader migration through Hong Kong being a major attraction in April and with the last of the summer visitors reaching northern Japan in late May and early June a visit to Taiwan in early May fits in very well indeed. Alternatively, a combined trip to Taiwan and Japan is worthwhile in winter during January or February, when enticing winter visitors such as Dusky *Turdus naumanni*, Brown-headed *T. chrysolaus* and Pale *T. pallidus* Thrushes, Olive-backed Pipit *Anthus hodgsoni* and Black-faced Bunting *Emberiza spodocephala* are present. It is possible to travel between the two countries by boat from Keelung in northern Taiwan to Okinawa, thence up the Japanese archipelago (note however, that waters around Taiwan and southern Japan are warm and largely devoid of seabirds in winter, but in summer the species regularly seen range from Brown Booby *Sula leucogaster* and Bulwer's Petrel *Bulweria bulwerii* to Black-naped Tern *Sterna sumatrana*). As many birders will combine visiting Taiwan with Japan, a list of those species to be found regularly or resident on Taiwan but not in Japan are listed in Appendix 1.

The majority of the island's endemic species are restricted to the highlands, which therefore tend to be the focus of most visits. Two approaches are possible. One can concentrate on the western lowland route, stopping off to visit river mouths and estuaries on the way, and searching for Saunders's Gull *Larus saundersi*⁶ and Black-faced Spoonbill *Platalea minor*, two globally threatened species that winter in Taiwan. Small numbers of Saunders's Gull can be found at Taichung Harbour or the mouth of the Tatu River (where there can also be a wide variety of east Asian shorebirds including Rufous-necked Stints *Calidris ruficollis*, depending on the season, and resident Oriental Skylark *Alauda gulgula*). Taiwan is now

known to be the most important wintering area for Black-faced Spoonbill (see *Around the Orient* this issue), with up to 145 in Tainan county in recent winters). From these lowland sites, perhaps using Taichung as a base, one can make sorties up and down into the mountains to the east. Alternatively one can travel the more tortuous routes in the mountains themselves from site to site² and this is the approach that I usually adopt.

During winter, rain is frequent, slowing the pace of birding (though the pheasants are often more visible under such conditions). Many of Taiwan's birds are skulking, secretive and hard to see, perhaps as a consequence of excessive and indiscriminate trapping⁷. Many of the species are wide-ranging in the highlands and the best way of seeing all of them is to visit several sites at different altitudes. There are many known and potential birding sites in Taiwan and I offer a general introduction to enable birders to find the majority of the island's endemics and a wide range of other species.



White-eared Sibia *Heterophasia auricularis*
by Craig Robson

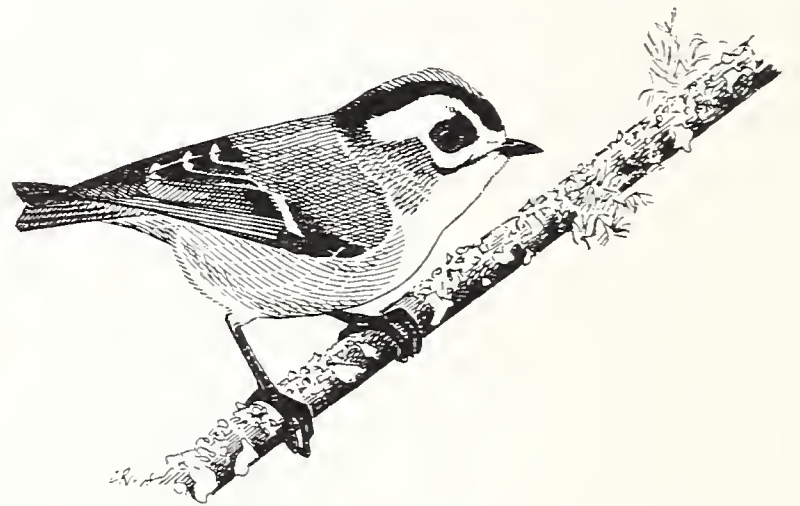
Usually I opt to drive a rented car from the airport south down the expressway as far as the Maioli interchange, then detour along routes #6 and #3 to join the 193 km long east-west "highway" (route #8) at Tungshih, bound for the mountains. This back route cuts a corner, and provides opportunities to search out forest or woodland edge species commoner at lower altitude such as Black-browed Barbet *Megalaima oorti*, Bronzed Drongo *Dicrurus aeneus*, Hwamei *Garrulax canorus*, Light-vented Bulbul *Pycnonotus sinensis*, Black Bulbul *Hypsipetes leucocephalus*, Dusky Fulvetta *Alcippe brunnea*, Long-tailed Shrike *Lanius schach* and Grey Treepie *Dendrocitta formosae*, though from Tiehchan-shan interchange there is a more direct route on to route #8 via Fenyuan. Route #8

is good for birding, particularly from Kukuan upwards, and it is well worth stopping over in Kukuan, if you have plenty of time, or at Lishan (Pear Mountain). You should be able to see a number of interesting species along the roadside of route #8 to Lishan, including Black-throated Tit *Aegithalos concinnus*, Green-backed Tit *Parus monticolus*, the very common Grey-cheeked Fulvetta *Alcippe morrisonia*, Red-capped Babbler *Stachyris ruficeps*, and the noisy, though sometimes elusive, Steere's Liocichla *Liocichla steerii* (E), while Plumbeous Water-Redstart *Rhyacornis fuliginosus* and perhaps even a Taiwan Whistling-Thrush *Myiophonus insularis* (E) can be seen along the streams.

At Lishan (1,945 m), the Lishan Guest House provides hotel-style accommodation just 30 km by road from the high pass at Tayuling (c 3,000 m), which makes it quite practical for early morning birding. For those on a lower budget the road-side stalls near the bus stop at Tayuling can provide basic sleeping accommodation which puts you within walking distance of some of the best habitat to be found. Along the old track which branches north just before the tunnel at Tayuling, you can expect to find a wide range of birds, including White-backed Woodpecker *Dendrocopos leucotos*, Streak-throated Fulvetta *Alcippe cinereiceps*, Taiwan Laughing-Thrush *Garrulax morrisonianus* (E), White-eared Sibia *Heterophasia auricularis* (E), Taiwan Yuhina *Yuhina brunneiceps* (E), Collared Bush-Robin *Tarsiger johnstoniae* (E), Yellowish-bellied Bush-Warbler *Cettia acanthizoides*, Flamecrest *Regulus goodfellowi* (E), Vinaceous Rosefinch *Carpodacus vinaceus* and Spotted Nutcracker *Nucifraga caryocatactes*. From Tayuling route #8 winds and descends its way spectacularly to the east coast and Hualien by way of Tienhsiang (450 m) and the Taroko Gorge. This tortuous journey through marble cliffs along the side of a deep, steep-sided gorge is not to be missed, though the faint-hearted should avoid driving! In the valley along the lower parts of the gorge, around Tienhsiang, Styan's Bulbul *Pycnonotus taivanus* can be found.

Along the road that branches southwards at Tayuling from just beyond the tunnel Alpine Accentors *Prunella collaris* are often seen. This road passes through dramatic scenery, crossing the mountains for over 40 km. It goes through Hohuan Shan and Lushan, climbing to the highest pass in Taiwan at 3,275 m, before dropping down to Zwefong (= Tsui Feng), at c. 2,000 m. This road

is sometimes blocked with snow in winter necessitating a long detour, that is fortunately by no means devoid of birdlife. Ching Ching Villa provides reasonable hotel accommodation at Zwefong, though cheaper accommodation is available at nearby Wushe. Zwefong is an excellent area for Swinhoe's Pheasant *Lophura swinhoii* and for more mid-level hill forest birds. Taiwan Partridge *Arborophila crudigularis* (E) is possible and there are Yellow Tit *Parus holsti* (E), Taiwan Barwing *Actinodura morrisoniana* (E), Dusky Fulvetta, White-bellied Yuhina *Yuhina zantholeuca*, Grey-chinned Minivet *Pericrocotus solaris* and Grey-headed Bullfinch *Pyrrhula erythaca* in addition to the usual fare of liocichlas, sibilas, *Cettia* warblers, parrotbills and tits. After mid-altitude birding at Zwefong the next area is 1,000 m lower down at the Chitou Forest Recreation Area. The three hour drive south descends through the foothills, and Collared Finchbill *Spizixos semitorques*, and Streak-breasted Scimitar-Babbler *Pomatorhinus ruficollis* can be looked for on the way.



Flamecrest *Regulus goodfellowi*
by Craig Robson

Chitou (1,100 m), is just two hours by road from Taichung, Taiwan's third largest city, and hence it is popular with tourists. It pays, therefore, to stay at the lodges within the park so as to be out early before the noisy crowds are active. Renowned amongst Taiwanese birders, Chitou offers a wide range of species for the persistent and patient visitor, including Crested Goshawk *Accipiter trivirgatus*, Mountain Scops-Owl *Otus spilocephalus*, Taiwan Partridge (E), Chinese Bamboo-Partridge *Bambusicola thoracica*, Ashy Wood-Pigeon *Columba pulchricollis*, White-bellied Green-Pigeon *Treron sieboldii*, Rusty Laughingthrush *Garrulax poecilorhynchus*, Scaly-breasted Wren-Babbler

Pnoepyga albiventer, Grey-capped Woodpecker *Dendrocopos canicapillus*, Spot-breasted Scimitar-Babbler *Pomatorhinus erythrocnemis*, Vivid Niltava *Niltava vivida*, Snowy-browed Flycatcher *Ficedula hyperythra*, Taiwan Shortwing *Brachypteryx (montana) goodfellowi* (?E), Fire-breasted Flowerpecker *Dicaeum ignipectus*, Taiwan Island Thrush *Turdus (poliocephala) niveiceps* (?E), White-tailed Robin *Cinclidium leucurum*, and Yellow Tit (E).

If you prefer to stay high in the mountains where there is always a chance of seeing the pheasants and more of the island's endemics, then from Chitou take the road up to Shan Lin Shi, where there are often Little Forktail *Enicurus scouleri*, Plumbeous Water-Redstart and Whistling-Thrushes around the waterfall, and a wide range of other species in the hillside woods. From there, a hiking trail along a disused Japanese railway line leads through the mountains. I have encountered Rusty Laughingthrush, Brownish-flanked Bush-Warbler *Cettia fortipes* and Ferruginous Flycatcher *Muscicapa ferruginea* at these altitudes, though they are widely dispersed. A branch path eventually leaves the disused railway and continues up to the current line which passes Monkey Rock on the way to the hill resort of Alishan (2,274 m).



Swinhoe's Pheasant *Lophura swinhoii*
by Craig Robson

It is a full day's hike one way from Shan Lin Shi to Alishan, but birding en route is good and despite the crowds at Alishan, especially at weekends, the surrounding forests can also be good. Alternatively Alishan Forest Recreation Area can also be reached by road from Taichung, or by narrow gauge railway from Chiayi to Alishan station (the highest in east Asia). The hike up at dawn for the

panorama from the mountain viewpoint is worthwhile, and the forest at these altitudes seems particularly good for barwings, sibilas and both bullfinches.

The real gem of Taiwan's mountains is of course Mikado Pheasant *Syrmaticus mikado*, which requires either inordinate good luck or assistance in obtaining a special permit for restricted mountain areas, and several days spent camping in a suitable area. The bird clubs in Taichung and Kaohsiung may well be able to help with the necessary assistance (see below). Personally I have found the area known as Wanghsiang, in the more remote mountains to the east of Alishan to be excellent for both Mikado and Swinhoe's Pheasants, and there is a lot more to look for, including Large Cuckoo-shrike *Coracina macei* and White-browed Bush-Robin *Tarsiger indicus*.

If you want to look for migrants it is worth continuing south from Alishan to the Kenting National Park and Oluanpi in the extreme south, and to Lanyu Island (45 sq km) where the Philippine Cuckoo-Dove *Macropygia tenuirostris* is found. If time is limited, however, then on your return to CKS airport consider a visit to the wooded areas around the huge reservoir of Shihmen Dam (52 km south-west of Taipei and closer to CKS) and the low grade agricultural land nearby. Birds include Lesser Coucal *Centropus bengalensis*, Black-naped Monarch *Hypothymis azurea* and the elusive Taiwan Magpie *Urocissa caerulea* (E). Those staying over in Taipei itself may wish to take a day trip out by bus to Wulai, 28 km south of Taipei, which can be good for Maroon Oriole *Oriolus traillii*, the magpie, and Varied Tit *Parus varius*.

Acknowledgements:

I would like to thank the many Taiwanese birders who have been both hospitable and who have kindly helped me with information and assistance, but in particular I would like to give special thanks to Wu Sen-Hsiung, of the Taichung Bird Study Group, whose great hospitality and friendship have made my visits to Taiwan so interesting and enjoyable.

Useful Addresses:

Kaohsiung Bird Society, 18 Guupo Street, Kaohsiung, Taiwan, ROC. Tel: (07) 5514651/551464.

Taichung Bird Study Group, No. 14 San Min Road, Sec. 1, 400 Taichung, Taiwan, ROC. Tel: (042) 625108.

Tourism Bureau, 9th Floor, 290 Chungshiao E. Road, Sec. 4, Taipei, ROC. Tel: (02) 7218541.

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Appendix 1

Birds resident or occurring regularly in Taiwan, but not in Japan.

E= Endemic to Taiwan; ?E = possibly endemic to Taiwan.

BLUE-BREASTED QUAIL	<i>Coturnix chinensis</i>
TAIWAN PARTEIDGE (E)	<i>Arborophila crudigularis</i>
SWINHOLE'S PHEASANT (E)	<i>Lophura swinhoii</i>
MIKADO PHEASANT (E)	<i>Symaticus mikado</i>
SMALL BUTTONQUAIL	<i>Turnix sylvatica</i>
GREY-CAPPED WOODPECKER	<i>Dendrocopos canicapillus</i>
BLACK-BROWED BARBET	<i>Megalaima oorti</i>
LARGE HAWK-CUCKOO	<i>Cuculus sparveroides</i>
LESSER COUCAL	<i>Centropus bengalensis</i>
EASTERN GRASS-OWL	<i>Tyto longimembris</i>
MOUNTAIN SCOPS-OWL	<i>Otus spilocephalus</i>
TAWNY FISH-OWL	<i>Ketupa flavipes</i>
BROWN WOOD-OWL	<i>Strix leptogrammica</i>
COLLARED OWLET	<i>Glaucidium brodiei</i>
ASHY WOOD-PIGEON	<i>Columba pulchricollis</i>
SPOTTED DOVE	<i>Streptopelia chinensis</i>
PHILIPPINE CUCKOO-DOVE	<i>Macropygia tenuirostris</i>
SLATY-BREASTED RAIL	<i>Gallirallus striatus</i>
CRESTED GOSHAWK	<i>Accipiter trivirgatus</i>
BLACK EAGLE	<i>Ictinaetus malayensis</i>
LONG-TAILED SHRIKE	<i>Lanius schach</i>
TAIWAN MAGPIE (E)	<i>Urocissa caerulea</i>
GREY TREEPIE	<i>Dendrocitta formosae</i>
MAROON ORIOLE	<i>Oriolus traillii</i>
LARGE CUCKOO-SHRIKE	<i>Coracina macei</i>
GREY-CHINNED MINIVET	<i>Pericrocotus solaris</i>
BLACK DRONGO	<i>Dicrurus macrocercus</i>
BRONZED DRONGO	<i>D. aeneus</i>
BLACK-NAPED MONARCH	<i>Hypothymis azurea</i>

TAIWAN WHISTLING-THRUSH (E)	<i>Myiophonus insularis</i>
TAIWAN ISLAND THRUSH (E)?	<i>Turdus (poliocephalus) niveiceps</i>
TAIWAN SHORTWING (E)	<i>Brachypteryx (montana) goodfellowi</i>
FERRUGINOUS FLYCATCHER	<i>Muscicapa ferruginea</i>
SNOWY-BROWED FLYCATCHER	<i>Ficedula hyperythra</i>
VIVID NILTAVA	<i>Niltava vivida</i>
WHITE-BROWED BUSH-ROBIN	<i>Tarsiger indicus</i>
COLLARED BUSH-ROBIN (E)	<i>T. johnstoniae</i>
PLUMBEOUS WATER-REDSTART	<i>Rhyacornis fuliginosus</i>
WHITE-TAILED ROBIN	<i>Cinclidium leucurum</i>
LITTLE FORKTAIL	<i>Enicurus scouleri</i>
GREEN-BACKED TIT	<i>Parus monticolus</i>
YELLOW TIT (E)	<i>P. holsti</i>
BLACK-THROATED TIT	<i>Aegithalos concinnus</i>
PLAIN MARTIN	<i>Riparia paludicola</i>
STRIATED SWALLOW	<i>Hirundo striolata</i>
FLAMECREST (E)	<i>Regulus goodfellowi</i>
COLLARED FINCHBILL	<i>Spizixos semitorques</i>
STYAN'S BULBUL (E)	<i>Pycnonotus taivanus</i>
BLACK BULBUL	<i>Hypsipetes leucocephalus</i>
GOLDEN-HEADED CISTICOLA	<i>Cisticola exilis</i>
STRIATED PRINIA	<i>Prinia criniger</i>
YELLOW-BELLIED PRINIA	<i>P. flaviventris</i>
PLAIN PRINIA	<i>P. inornata</i>
BROWNISH-FLANKED BUSH-WARBLER	<i>Cettia fortipes</i>
YELLOWISH-BELLIED BUSH-WARBLER	<i>C. acanthizoides</i>
BROWN BUSH-WARBLER	<i>Bradypterus luteoventris</i>
RUFIOUS-FACED WARBLER	<i>Abroscopus albogularis</i>
WHITE-THROATED LAUGHINGTHRUSH	<i>Garrulax albogularis</i>
RUSTY LAUGHINGTHRUSH	<i>G. poecilorhynchus</i>
HWAMEI	<i>G. canorus</i>
WHITE-WHISKERED LAUGHINGTHRUSH (E)	<i>G. morrisonianus</i>
STEERE'S LIOCICHLA (E)	<i>Liocichla steerii</i>
SPOT-BREASTED SCIMITAR-BABBLER	<i>Pomatorhinus erythrocnemis</i>
STREAK-BREASTED SCIMITAR-BABBLER	<i>P. ruficollis</i>
SCALY-BREASTED WREN-BABBLER	<i>Pnoepyga albiventer</i>
RUFIOUS-CAPPED BABBLER	<i>Stachyris ruficeps</i>
TAIWAN BARWING (E)	<i>Actinodura morrisoniana</i>
STREAK-THROATED FULVETTA	<i>Alcippe cinereiceps</i>
DUSKY FULVETTA	<i>A. brunnea</i>
GREY-CHEEKED FULVETTA	<i>A. morrisonia</i>
WHITE-EARED SIBIA (E)	<i>Heterophasia auricularis</i>
TAIWAN YUHINA (E)	<i>Yuhina brunneiceps</i>
WHITE-BELLIED YUHINA	<i>Y. zantholeuca</i>
VINOUS-THROATED PARROTBILL	<i>Paradoxornis webbianus</i>
GOLDEN PARROTBILL	<i>P. verreauxi</i>
ORIENTAL SKYLARK	<i>Alauda gulgula</i>
PLAIN FLOWERPECKER	<i>Dicaeum concolor</i>
FIRE-BREASTED FLOWERPECKER	<i>D. ignipectus</i>
WHITE-RUMPED MUNIA	<i>Lonchura striata</i>
SCALY-BREASTED MUNIA	<i>L. punctulata</i>
BLACK-HEADED MUNIA	<i>L. malacca</i>
VINACEOUS ROSEFINCH	<i>Carpodacus vinaceus</i>
BROWN BULLFINCH	<i>Pyrrhula nipalensis</i>
GREY-HEADED BULLFINCH	<i>P. erythaca</i>

Dr Mark Brazil: 27 Colville Road, Melton Constable, Norfolk NR24 2DD, U.K..

Recent records of the Oriental Stork from China

An Oriental Stork *Ciconia boyciana* was found in savanna grassland on the edge of Lugu Lake during surveys of wetland birds in early January 1992. Lugu Lake is located at 27°33'-43'N 100°50'-55'E at an elevation of 2,685 m in the south-east section of the Tibetan Plateau and is administratively part of both Sichuan and Yunnan. This record constitutes the first record for Yunnan⁵.

According to local people the Oriental Stork is resident and even breeds there. A previous nesting site of the stork with old nests on treetops on a small island in the lake was visited by the authors, and locals had on one occasion seen the species nesting on a high cliff along the lake shore.

However, on visiting the area in May 1992 we found no Oriental Storks.

Cheng¹ mapped the Oriental Stork, which he treated as a sub-species of White Stork *Ciconia ciconia*, as breeding in extreme north-east China and wintering in southern China along the middle and lower reaches of the Yangtze River and along the south-east coast, including Taiwan (Figure 1).

In recent years, there have been several sightings of the Oriental Stork in central and south-west China which lie outside the range given by Cheng¹. Excluding the Lugu Lake sighting these are (numbers refer to sites on map): (1) a bird was sighted in late June 1991 at Taolimiao-Alashan Nur of Ordos, Inner Mongolia, c. 39°48'N 109°35'E³; (2) near Ruogergai, north-west Sichuan, c. 33°30'N 102°40'E, as a winter visitor⁴; (3) Pingli in Shaanxi, c. 32°30'N 109°30'E, with records in December 1985 and in winter 1986²; (4) near Yangjiawan Reservoir, Weining, Guizhou, c. 27°N 105°E, an individual was found in late December 1979 the only record from Guizhou⁶. These recent records enlarge the range of the Oriental Stork mapped by Cheng (Figure 1).

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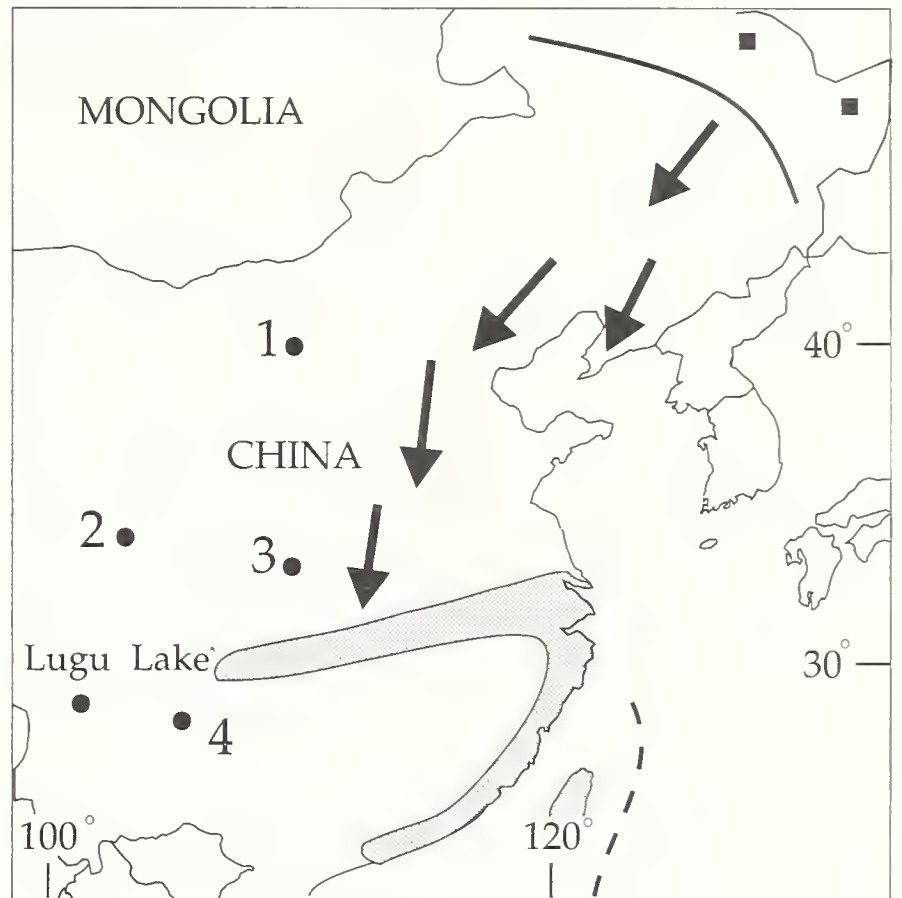


Figure 1. The distribution of the Oriental Stork *Ciconia boyciana* in China, adapted from Cheng¹. Breeding range (filled squares) with the southern limit (thick line); wintering range (grey shading) and migration routes (arrows). New localities (filled circles) with the numbers coinciding with the bracketed numbers against locality names in the text.

Readers wishing to know more about the species should consult *The historical and current status of the Oriental Stork* by Simba Chan published in the 1990 Hong Kong Bird Report. Ed.

Zhang Yin-sun and He Fen-qi, Institute of Zoology, Academia Sinica, Beijing, China



Recently published

Kingfishers, bee-eaters & rollers by C. Hilary Fry, Kathie Fry and Alan Harris, 1992. London: Christopher Helm (A. & C. Black). 324 pp, £27.99 (hb).

In a poem written in 1983, the Poet Laureate of England, Ted Hughes, talked of the Kingfisher being like a bird "escaped from the jeweller's opium". Though written about the widespread *Alcedo atthis*, such vivid imagery could easily apply to any of the 123 species of kingfishers, bee-eaters and rollers so delightfully illustrated in this work. For this is a visually stunning book on an equally stunning group of birds, all 40 colour plates being spangled with the same opiate brilliance that Ted Hughes' poem evokes.

Essentially a guide to identification, each species is catalogued in one or two pages of text outlining field characters, voice, geographical variation, habitat and range, food, habits, description (including measurements) and key references. The plates, painted by Alan Harris, are accompanied by colour coded maps showing distribution, and there are 24 pages describing the general biology of the whole order Coraciiformes. Of the species depicted, 40 occur in the Oriental region, which represents a particularly important area for the dacelonid (eg. *Halcyon* spp.) and alcedinid (eg. *Alcedo* spp.) kingfishers.

Throughout the text, the enthusiasm and knowledge of Hilary and Kathie Fry for their subject is self-evident, gleaned not only from the literature, but also from the very keen eyes of accomplished field biologists. They bring this knowledge to the reader in a clear and accessible way, and through a thorough compilation of the information available on each species. Although there are inevitably gaps for the lesser known birds, they represent true information needs, and I'm sure these will act as a spur to readers keen enough to make their own contributions to the literature. For the better known species, space was clearly a constraint in distilling the information available, although here the key references always permit the more interested reader to go to other sources.

If I had frustrations, they were in the general section on coraciiform biology, which is sometimes sketchy and far from exhaustive. Ecology is particularly thinly treated, and I would have liked to have been promoted to think of the ecological factors which affect distribution

and abundance, breeding strategies, morphology, and other adaptations to the contrasting environments in which the species occur. My ecologist's perspective, after all, leads me to the view that bird identification and taxonomy is only a stepping stone to **understanding** the place of birds in ecosystems. Why, for example, are kingfishers, bee-eaters and rollers so colourful? Nor is there anything other than a passing mention of conservation problems; these encompass far more than the question of rarity and endangered status to which the authors allude on page 24. In part these omissions reflect the space available, but also they reflect the authors' stronger interests in taxonomy and identification than in ecology. More importantly, they reflect the dearth of sound ecological information about so many species in this order.

These really are minor quibbles, however, about a book whose widest purchase will be for identification, and for the sheer delight of owning a copy. In this age of emphasis on biodiversity, I thoroughly recommend that anyone who is able should acquire this reminder of the splendour of some of the most beautiful animals on earth.

Steve Ormerod.

A guide to the wild birds of Taiwan by Wu Sen-Hsiung and Yang Hsiouying, illustrated by Koji Taniguchi, 1991. Published by the Taiwan Wild Bird Information Centre and the Wild Bird Society of Japan. 274 pp. 458 species described with 1258 illustrations. ISBN: 957-9578-00-01 (sb).

Despite being available only in Chinese (an English language edition was rumoured to be forthcoming, but may be several more years in the pipeline) this book is an absolute must for visitors to Taiwan and in fact to anyone interested in east Asian ornithology. It greatly supersedes everything previously published on Taiwan's birds. The artwork, by the Japanese artist Koji Taniguchi, is superior to that in *A field guide to the birds of Japan* (WBSJ 1982) and, as it includes scientific and English bird names, and excellent distribution maps, it is an invaluable field aid. I will make no comment concerning the quality of the text! The fact that it has been co-authored by Wu Sen-Hsiung leads me to believe, however, that it will have been written with great care and attention and aimed at increasing public

awareness of the importance of birds amongst the public of Taiwan.

It will do nothing, however, to ease confusion over the taxonomy of Taiwan's birds as it seems not to follow consistently the accepted standards, nor the most recent literature. The English names chosen will frustrate world birders, and outdated taxonomy will lead another generation of Asian birders astray. For example the migratory scops-owls are still considered *Otus scops* (they are in fact Oriental Scops *O. sunia*), while those resident on Lanyu Island are the regional endemic Ryukyu Scops *O. elegans*; the migratory honey-buzzards are still considered *Pernis apivorus*, rather than the generally accepted Oriental Honey-buzzard *P. ptilorhynchus*, and the wren-babbler is still considered Pygmy despite Harrap (1989) Identification, vocalizations and taxonomy of *Pnoepyga* wren-babblers. Forktail 5:61-70. But, carping aside, as every author knows every book has its faults, and the compactness of this excellently produced guide, its high quality illustrations and maps (these are either Asia-wide following the WBSJ (1982) outlines, or detailed of Taiwan itself making them very useful for endemic and restricted range species) more than offset its failings and make it essential luggage for visiting birders.

Mark Brazil

Putting biodiversity on the map: priority areas for global conservation by the International Council for Bird Preservation. Cambridge UK: ICBP. 96 pp. £12.50 (sb).

Brilliant! At last a technical publication communicated to a lay audience with elegance and ease. ICBP are to be congratulated on producing a publication that does justice to a superbly conceived and executed project and one of immense importance for global conservation. In 96 A4-sized highly-coloured graphic pages, the reader is taken through a neatly-reasoned argument. First, there is an introduction to concepts of biodiversity, endemism, and biological indicators, and the aim of the study - to identify priority areas for the conservation of global biological diversity, through the presentation of a global overview of the most important concentrations of restricted-range species for use by conservation planners and policy-makers.

The methods and assumptions used in compiling and analysing the data base are crisply and clearly described. The database itself is awesome - some 2,609 extant species plus 59 extinct species each with 11 fields, and 50,914 locality records each with 12 fields. The species, 27% of the world's current total, are those with restricted ranges, i.e. a total global breeding range of

50,000 km² or less. Using a geographical information system (GIS) and a multivariate statistical package (TWINSPAN), areas containing two or more species entirely restricted to them have been identified and termed endemic bird areas (EBAs) - 221 EBAs in total. There is a detailed analysis of locations, types, sizes, etc. of EBAs of which some key findings are that Indonesia contains the most EBAs with 24 - far ahead of Peru and Brazil with 18 and 17, and has the most restricted-range species with over 400 in total (cf. 210 and 200 for Peru and Brazil); 76% of all EBAs are in the tropics and none north of 45°N; 54% are continental and the rest on islands; 76 EBAs are smaller than 10,000 km²; and the number of restricted-range species in EBAs ranges from 2-67 (the latter being the Solomon Islands).

Most EBAs are forests and the analysis next looks at threats - 85% of EBAs have at least one threatened species, and habitat destruction is the greatest threat. Perhaps the key finding of the study is Figure 17 on p. 23. The total area occupied by EBAs is less than 6.5 million km²; thus 26% of the world's birds are confined to just 4.5% of the world's land area or, more memorably, 20% of the world's birds are confined to just 2% of the world's land area.

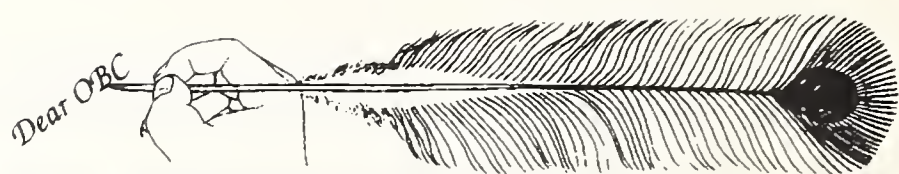
The next section is devoted to a regional analysis of EBAs which for me is the most fascinating part of the book with a series of coloured maps and cross-referenced tables, and further information in appendices. One of the few typographical errors occurs here - the south-east and south-west Australia EBAs being transposed in the key.

The next step in the argument is to correlate patterns of endemism in birds with those of other groups. With only intermittent data, this is done admirably, an excellent example being undertaken using mammals and reptiles in Indonesia and the Philippines (p. 50). This is followed by an evaluation of conservation priorities using objective criteria to rank the importance of EBAs and the degree of threat they are faced with. This concludes by recognising three classes of conservation priority - critical (79 EBAs), urgent (87), and high (55). Finally, two examples from Viet Nam and Mexico are given of what the next step should be.

And that's it, concise and elegant. Despite producing an eight-page summary in a separate document, the main book has the key points of each paragraph highlighted in the margin so that the essence of the book can be conveyed to decision-makers without recourse to the detail of the text. This and the clear, colourful diagrams make it an excellent working document, and ICBP deserve considerable success from it. Buy a copy!

Phillip J. Edwards

To the editor



The specific status of Bare-headed Laughingthrush

The Bare-headed Laughingthrush *Garrulax calvus* of the mountains of northern Borneo is usually considered conspecific with the Black Laughingthrush *G. lugubris* of Peninsular Malaysia and Sumatra^{1,2}. However, Sibley and Monroe³ (1990) treated them as specifically distinct, although members of a superspecies. They gave no reason for this innovation.

I have been fortunate enough to see both forms on several occasions, most recently in June 1992, and have always been struck by their similarities in behaviour and vocalisations. Both are somewhat quiet, shy and retiring, especially compared to Chestnut-capped Laughingthrush *G. mitratus* and Sunda Laughingthrush *G. palliatus*, with which they frequently consort. But, once alarmed or excited, their calls are loud and distinctive.

On 18 June 1992, at Kinabalu Park, Sabah, I came across a mixed flock of Chestnut-capped and Sunda Laughingthrushes. I thought that they might be accompanied by some Bare-headed Laughingthrushes, but had neither heard nor seen any sign of that species. Nevertheless, I played a tape of the call of Black Laughingthrush, recorded at Fraser's Hill, Peninsular Malaysia. The response was immediate and dramatic. About five Bare-headed Laughingthrushes approached closely and began calling, their vocalisations being identical to that on the tape. In the preceding and

following days I heard and saw several parties of Bare-headed Laughingthrushes, and their calls (given spontaneously, without prompting by playback) were always the same, and always identical to that of the tape of Black Laughingthrush (two or three single notes, followed by a wild laugh of 10 to 20 notes in succession, 'hup, hup, hup, ho-ho-ho...''). A few days later, I was at Fraser's Hill, and played the same tape to a party of Black Laughingthrushes, with identical results to those obtained at Kinabalu.

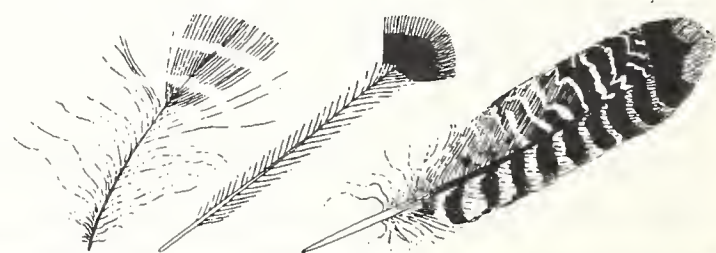
These observations, despite their casual nature, strongly suggest that Bare-headed and Black Laughingthrushes would recognise each other as the same species. Their widely disjunct distributions would make such a meeting unlikely but, nevertheless, they should be treated as conspecific.

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Simon Harrap, El Coqui, 3 Beresford Road, Holt, Norfolk. NR25 6EW, U.K.

Stray feathers



Help for birders visiting Sulawesi

Birders visiting Lore Lindu National Park (central Sulawesi) and Dumoga Bone National Park (northern Sulawesi) have on occasions encountered difficulties visiting these important sites. Therefore members may be interested in the services (transport including four-wheel drive, procurement of permits etc.) of Rolex Lameanda (Lore Lindu National Park) and Mona Saroinsong (Dumoga Bone National Park), Rolex Lameanda can provide a jeep (approx £42 per day) for getting to the remote areas of Lore Lindu National

Park, while a seven seater Toyota Kijang can be hired from Mona Saroinsong (approx £30 per day).

Rolex Lameanda can be contacted at Sub Balai KSDA Sulawesi Tengah, Jalan Prof. M Yamin, PO Box 2, Palu, Sulawesi Tengah and Mona Saroinsong at Po Box 1406, Manado 9511 Sulut.

Pittas and Broadbills of the world

The world's Pittas and Broadbills are the subject of a new book to be published by Helm Information. The book is currently in preparation, and the author is

seeking unpublished notes from those who have been fortunate enough to observe Pittas and Broadbills in the field. In particular, information is required on the following, of any species: dates of nesting, or observations of recently fledged young, descriptions of juveniles, descriptions of nest sites and nests, any information on diet, observations at unusual altitudes, or in unusual habitats, or range extensions, or observations on behaviour. All contributors will be acknowledged in the book.

Please submit your observations to Frank Lambert, c/o 15 Bramble Rise, Brighton. BN1 5GE. U.K. To assist the artist, any photos showing typical stance and jizz of these birds would also be appreciated, and should be sent to Martin Woodcock, The Fives, Elderden Farm, Staplehurst, Tonbridge. TN12 0RN. U. K.

Information on Babblers and Logrunners

Craig Robson and Clive Byers are working on a new book provisionally entitled "Babblers of the World: an identification guide". The book aims to deal with the identification of all babbler and logrunner species, as well as all the distinctive subspecies; all will be illustrated in colour. Apart from the more obvious genera, the following will provisionally be included in the book; *Modulatrix*, *Arcanator*, *Illadopsis*, *Kakamega*, *Ptyrticus*, *Neomixis*, *Panurinae*, *Lioptilus*, *Kupeornis*, *Parophasma*, *Phyllanthus*, *Oxylabes*, *Crossleyia*, *Mystacornis*, *Panurus*, *Conostoma*, *Paradoxornis*, *Rhabdornis* and *Chamaea*. The author/artist and artist would welcome any information on babblers and logrunners, particularly photographs (in the wild or otherwise), recordings or transcriptions of vocalizations, details of breeding biology and behaviour, habitat requirements, status and diet. All contributions that are used will be acknowledged. Readers are invited to send any information to Craig Robson, 63 Stafford Street, Norwich, Norfolk. NR2 3BD, U.K.

Conference in Brunei

The Kuala Belalong Field Study Centre in the Temburong district of Brunei, was completed in January 1991 for the University of Brunei/Royal Geographical Society Brunei Rainforest Project. The University of Brunei Darussalam (UBD) is now planning a conference to review the scientific findings of the last two years. The conference, entitled 'Tropical Rainforest Research: Current Issues', will provide both a focus for current work on tropical rainforest biodiversity and dynamics and a forum for the presentation of results from the UBD/RGS Brunei Rainforest Project.

The conference will be held from 9 to 17 April 1993 in Bandar Seri Begawan (the capital of Brunei Darussalam) on the university campus. There will be

the opportunity of visiting the UBD Field Study Centre at Kuala Belalong. If you would like more information, contact: The Rainforest Conference organiser, Registrar's Office, University of Brunei Darussalam, Bandar Seri Begawan 3186, Brunei, Darussalam. Tel: 673 (0)2 427001, Fax: 673 (0)2 427003.

More Pittas

Johannes Erritzoe is working on a new book, "The pittas of the world". The book is intended to summarise for each species all published information of this very little known family (last monograph was Elliot's in 1895). A colour plate is planned for all the 31 species and some other colour illustrations for the subspecies as well.

The author would welcome any unpublished or published information eg. field observations, vocalizations, breeding records, window-killed birds or dead by other accidents, current status on populations. Even observation on captive birds are of interest.

Loaned photographs, also of captive birds, or the habitat, would be welcomed. Any information or photographs used for reference will be returned in due course and contributions will be gratefully acknowledged in the book. Please send any information to: Johannes Erritzoe, Taps Old Rectory, DK-6070 Christiansfeld, Denmark.

Ever visited Desert National Park?

Harkirat Sangha is currently surveying the birds of the Desert National Park, Rajasthan, India and threats to the park, part-funded by the OBC Conservation Fund. He is compiling a report on the status of bird species in the park and as a result of his study will be making recommendations on future conservation measures to the Rajasthan Forest Department. To enable him to produce a comprehensive report Harkirat requests copies of trip reports from OBC members. These will be fully acknowledged in the report. Please write to him at B-27 Gautam Marg, Khatipura, Jaipur 302 012, India.

New Journal for Tropical Biodiversity

The Indonesian Foundation for the Advancement of Biological Sciences launched a new scientific journal in September, *Tropical Biodiversity*. The journal is intended to promote research and awareness of issues that relate to the understanding and conservation of tropical habitats throughout the world. To receive a copy of this new journal, contact: The Managing Editor, *Tropical Biodiversity*, PO Box 103, Depok 16401, Indonesia.

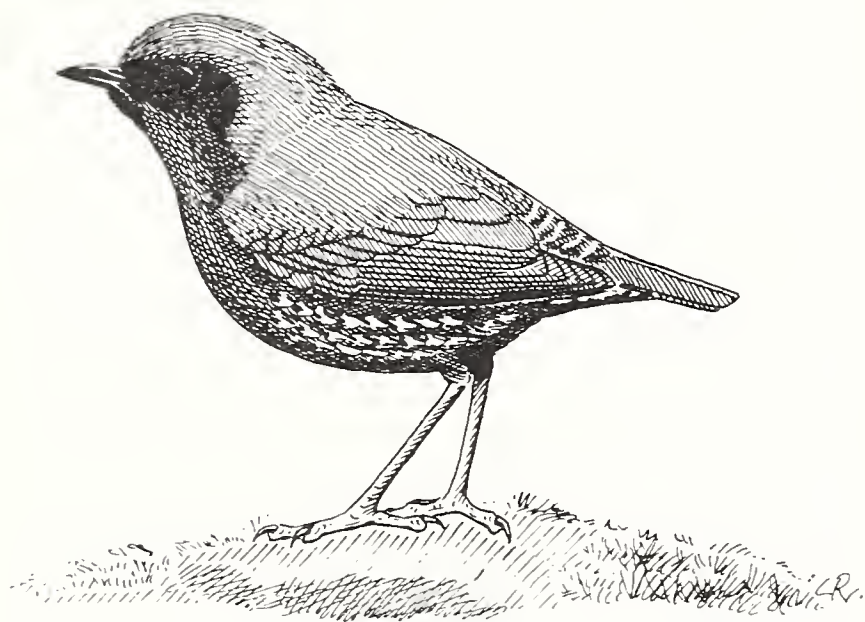


From the field

These are largely unconfirmed records covering the period from the beginning of March to the end of August 1992. We urge that if they have not already done so, contributors provide full details to the relevant regional organisations in due course.

CHINA

A remarkable record was received of two Gould's Shortwings *Brachypteryx stellata* at Jiuzhaigou, north Sichuan on 21 May (JC, DH); the nearest previous localities being in north-west Yunnan and north-west Guizhou



Gould's Shortwing *Brachypteryx stellata*
by Craig Robson

HONG KONG

A number of sightings involving second records for Hong Kong were recorded during the first half of this year. A Blue-throated Bee-eater *Merops viridis* was seen at Ng Fai Tin, Clearwater Bay on 19 May (G, DK), a first summer Slender-billed Gull *Larus genei*, at Mai Po from 3 to at least 11 April (PL *et al.*) and a first winter Black-legged Kittiwake *Rissa tridactyla*, found from the boardwalk at Mai Po on 8 February (GC, PK) and still present on 1 March (JH). A Lanceolated Warbler *Locustella lanceolata* at Luk Keng on 17 May (PK *et al.*) was the first spring record for Hong Kong. Two pairs of Besras *Accipiter virgatus*, one at Sheun Wan on 1 May and the other at Tai Po Kau on 6 May (RL) were noteworthy, as were single

Little Stints *Calidris minuta* at Mai Po on 8-11 April (GC *et al.*), 20 April (ML, RL), 3 May (PK) and 5-6 May (PL).

Other interesting records were a Brown-rumped Minivet *Pericrocotus cantonensis* at Tai Po Kau from 5-12 April (ML *et al.*), three Chestnut-cheeked Starlings *Sturnus philippensis* at Mai Po on 12 April (JH) with one there on 23 April (KS), a Two-barred Warbler *Phylloscopus plumbeitarsus* at Shek Kong on 10/11 April (Army), one or two Pechora Pipits *Anthus gustavi* at Tai Mo Shan on 26 April (PK) and another at Mai Po on 13 May (PL, DM, FW) and a Yellow-browed Bunting *Emberiza chrysophrys* at Mai Po on 17-18 April.

INDONESIA

Java

Two roosting Rajah Scops-Owls *Otus brookii* found along the trail to Gunung Gede, Gunung Gede-Pangrango National Park, on 9 August (KB) represent a range extension, the bird being known previously from east Java, Borneo and Sumatra.

Komodo

Two new records for the island, a Grey Plover *Pluvialis squatarola* and several Arctic Warblers *Phylloscopus borealis* were the results of a visit on 14 April (SvB). Other species seen the same day, which were not reported from the island by White and Bruce (1986), but were mentioned by Hoogerwerf (1955), were Asian Koel *Eudynamis scolopacea*, Ruddy Cuckoo-Dove *Macropygia emiliana* (heard) and a pair of Malaysian Plovers *Charadrius peronii* (SvB).

Moluccas

A single Long-whiskered Owlet-Nightjar *Aegotheles crinifrons* was seen after responding to a tape-recording at Kali Batu Putih, Halmahera, on 24 August and others frequently heard during 24-28 August (NG). A flock of at least 16 Pink-necked

Green-Pigeons *Treron vernans* were seen in mangroves near Sidangoli, Halmahera, on 29 August (NG), the second record for the island, the previous one being at the same locality (see *OBC Bull.* 9).

Rinca

One or more Arctic Warblers on 18 April (SvB), were new for the island.

Sulawesi

In Dumoga-Bone National Park, a female Green-backed Kingfisher *Actenoides monachus* was observed at Doludua, on 22 August (NG) and a pair of Sulawesi Owls *Tyto rosenbergii* were regularly seen at Toraut, between 19 and 22 August (NG); with mating being observed on the 20th. In Lore Lindu National Park, Sulawesi Woodcocks *Scolopax celebensis* were seen along the track to Anaso and lower down near the junction with Dongi-dongi, on 13 August (NG) and a single Great Shortwing *Heinrichia calligyna* responded to a tape-recording just below the summit on the track to Anaso, on 15 August (NG).

Sumatra

Three Ferruginous Partridges *Caloperdix oculea* were heard and another seen in the vicinity of Way Kanan, Way Kambas National Park, on 24 August (NR, KM, CM). There are apparently no recent records from this part of the island.

MALAYSIA

Sabah

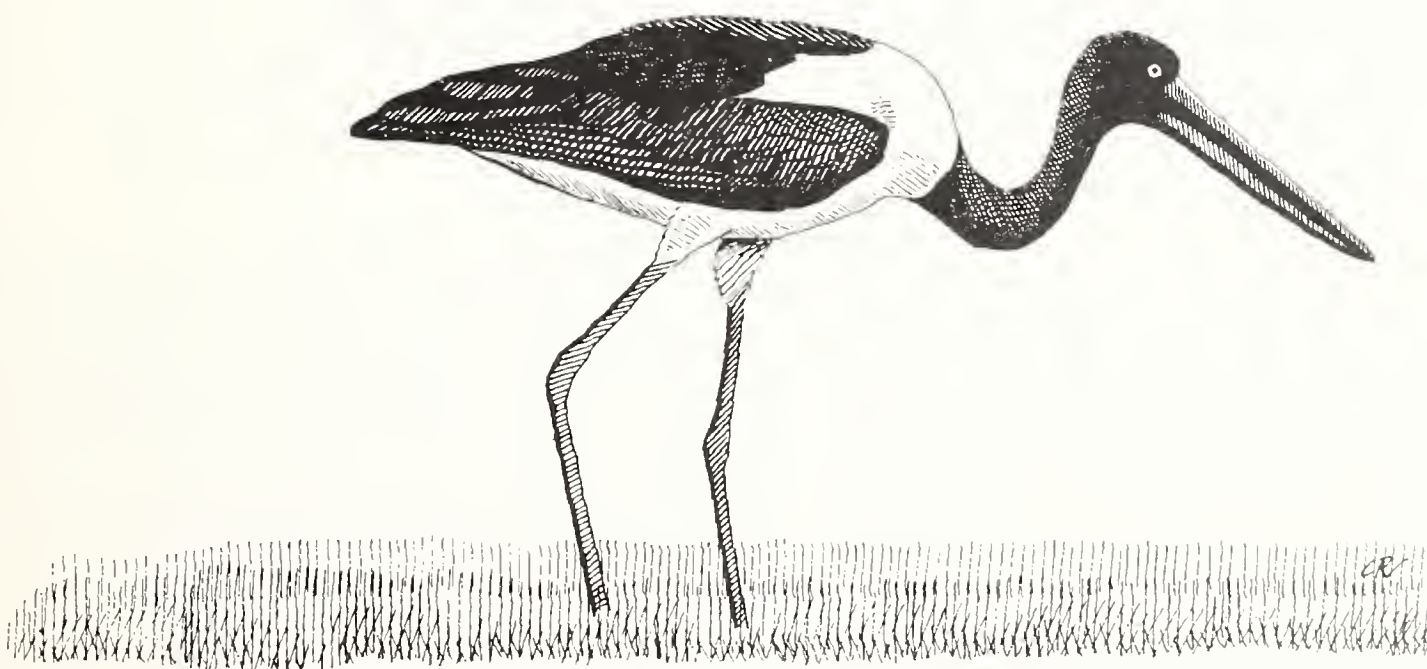
At Danum Valley a singing pair of Long-billed Partridges *Rhizothera longirostris* were seen and heard from c. 19-29 March (RO, SB, DSh *et al.*). This is apparently the first record for Sabah (see Birdwatching Areas this issue).

TAIWAN

A first winter male Scaly-sided Merganser *Mergus squamatus* was seen on a small river at Chinshan beach, on 28 and 30 March (JC, MR).

THAILAND

Three Chinese Egrets *Egretta eulophotes*, including one in summer plumage, were seen on the Krabi mudflats, Krabi on 28 March (BB, DC, MC, NW) and there were two there, one in summer plumage and one in a transitional stage, on 3 April (JP, PR, UT). A probable Short-tailed Shearwater *Puffinus tenuirostris* was seen at Ban Chai Thale Rangchan, Samut Sakhon on 11 March (PC) and, if accepted, would be the first recorded in the inner Gulf of Thailand. A pair of White-winged Ducks *Cairina scutulata* were reported flying over a village along the Mae Nam Bang Nara, Narathiwat, close to the boundary of Chalermprakiat Wildlife Sanctuary (Pa Phru), on 6 June (JP) and at least one Grey-headed Fish-Eagle *Ichthyophaga ichthyaetus* was seen regularly along the same river during 3-13 June (KK, JP). A single Black-necked Stork *Ephippiorhynchus asiaticus* seen at Hat Chao Mai,



Black-necked Stork *Ephippiorhynchus asiaticus* by Craig Robson

Trang, during 1-3 April (DS, PV *et al.*) and again on 3 June (JE, PR), may be the last individual in the country. The locality has been a regular site for the species for more than 50 years and up to five birds were photographed there in the early 1980s. At least two Lesser Adjutants *Leptoptilos javanicus* were identified out of a flock of seven *Leptoptilos*, at Sungai Padi on 12-13 June (JP) and a Greater Adjutant *L. dubius* present at Chalermprakiat Wildlife Sanctuary (Pa Phru), Narathiwat from 3-8 June (KK, JP) was apparently the first record for the peninsula. A single Large Green-Pigeon *Treron capellei* (KK) and a pair of Malaysian Blue-Flycatchers *Cyornis turcosus* (KK, JP) were also seen at Chalermprakiat Wildlife Sanctuary (Pa Phru) on 3 June, the only known site for the species in Thailand (KK). A pair of Masked Finfoots *Heliopais personata* with three young were reported from the Krabi mangroves, Krabi on 29 May by a reliable local boatman (SK). If accepted, this represents the first breeding record from Thailand and the entire Sunda region, where the species has long been considered a non-breeding visitor. House Sparrows *Passer domesticus* continue to spread into northern Thailand, the latest record being of five or six birds with a flock of Eurasian Tree Sparrows at Lomsak district police station, Phetchabun on 6 May (SKr). A colony of 15 pairs of Asian Golden Weavers *Ploceus hypoxanthus*, with 18 nests in various stages of completion, was found at Khon Kaen University campus, Khon Kaen on 19 July (NA, NC, CK, NN), constituting an interesting range extension for this scarce species of wetlands. No fewer than 22 Nordmann's Greenshanks *Tringa guttifer* were seen at Ko Libong, Trang during the last week of March (B) and there were 15-20 on the Krabi mudflats, Krabi on 28 March (BB, DC, MC, NW). Also of interest was a flock of 12 Painted Storks *Mycteria leucocephala* circling over Chitrlada Palace, Bangkok on 28 July (PR, UT).

VIET NAM

A visit to the Vu Quang reserve, on the Laos border south-west of Ha Tinh, Nghe Tinh (North Annam) by WWF and Vietnamese scientists (JM *et al.*; see Around the Orient, this issue) and especially the exploration of a 2,235 m mountain in the reserve discovered considerable range extensions for the following species: Rufous-bellied Eagle *Hieraaetus kienerii*, Slender-billed Oriole *Oriolus tenuirostris*, Yellow-bellied Fantail *Rhipidura hypoxantha*, Lesser

Shortwing *Brachypteryx leucophrys*, White-browed Shortwing *B. montana*, Hill Blue-Flycatcher *Cyornis banyumas*, Plumbeous Water-Redstart *Rhyacornis fuliginosus*, Mountain Bulbul *Hypsipetes mcclllandii*, Greater Necklaced Laughingthrush *Garrulax pectoralis*, White-cheeked Laughingthrush *G. vassali*, Rufous-vented Laughingthrush *G. gularis* (first Viet Nam record), Red-tailed Laughingthrush *G. milnei* and Abbott's Babbler *Malacocincla abbotti*. A number of these species had already been recorded from nearby areas on the Laos side of the border. Other new species for North Annam were: Banded Bay Cuckoo *Cacomantis sonneratii*, Himalayan Swiftlet *Collocalia brevirostris*, Collared Scops-Owl *Otus lempiji*, White-browed Scimitar-Babbler *Pomatorhinus schisticeps* and White-hooded Babbler *Gampsorhynchus rufulus*. Other interesting species recorded were Wreathed Hornbill *Aceros undulatus*, Collared Crow *Corvus torquatus*, and a local hunter produced the upper mandible of a Spot-billed Pelican *Pelecanus philippensis*.

Records were collated by Craig Robson from observations and contributions by the following: N. Aueng (NA), S. van Balen (SvB), B. Barnacal (BB), Birdquest (B), S. Buckton (SB), N. Charoensri (NC), J. Christensen (JC), D. Clugston (DC), P. Combridge (PC), M. Cowlard (MC), J. Eames (JE), N. Gardner (NG), D. Holden (DH), Hong Kong Birdwatching Society (Army, GC, G, JH, DK, ML, PL, RL, KS, FW), P. Kennerley (PK), S. Khruawan (SK), King Bird Tours (KB), K. Komolphalin (KK), S. Kraichoke (SKr), C. Krisapetcharat (CK), J. MacKinnon (JM), D. Melville (DM), C. Mitchell (CM), K. Mitchell (KM), N. Nualnetr (NN), R. Orenstein (RO), J. Parr (JP), M. Ranestrom (MR), N. Redman (NR), P. Round (PR), D. Showler (DSh), D. Suwanrungsi (DS), U. Treesucon (UT), P. Voravan (PV), N. Westwood (NW).

Erratum: in "From the field", under Viet Nam, the text covering Black-hooded Laughingthrush *Garrulax milleti* is incorrect and should have read: "two flocks of Black-hooded Laughingthrushes totalling c. 20 birds were seen and another flock heard near Di Linh, Lam Dong on 4 January". The species was not recorded at Ho Tuyen Lam as stated.



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Sun 6th December

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Guidelines for contributors

Whilst the Editor is always pleased to discuss possible contributions with potential authors; and to advise on preparation, it would be helpful if the following guidelines could be adhered to:

1. **Articles** These should be written clearly, preferably typed, on one side of the page, with all lines double-spaced, leaving wide margins, and should be no longer than 2,000 words. Scientific names should appear at the first mention of each species or, if all species appear in a table, they may be given there instead. Scientific names should, where possible, C. G. Sibley and B. L. Monroe (1990) *Distribution and taxonomy of birds of the world*.

Any tables to accompany articles should be prepared on separate pieces of paper, and be thoroughly checked. Titles of tables should be self-explanatory. Diagrams should be clearly drawn, in ink, ideally 15cm wide and 11cm high. References should be cited in alphabetical order at the end of the paper in the same style used in this Bulletin.

It would be helpful if two copies of each contribution could be submitted.

2. **From the field** These should follow the format in the current edition of the OBC Bulletin, and be sent to OBC, c/o The Lodge, Sandy, Bedfordshire, SG19 2DL, UK.

3. **News/Information** Typed or handwritten contributions should be sent to A. Long, c/o The Lodge, Sandy, Bedfordshire, SG19 2DL, UK.

Although every effort is made to retain all articles in their submitted form, the Editorial Committee reserves the right to make changes that it deems necessary, and, in a minimum of cases, without prior reference to the author. It is assumed that all contributors submitting material understand and accept these conditions.

For **Around the Orient, Recently published, Stray feathers**, the deadline for submission of material is 1 March (May Bulletin) and 1 September (November Bulletin). The deadlines do not apply to main articles which will be published as soon as possible after acceptance by the Editorial Committee.

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53. ADVERTISEMENTS	© The Oriental Bird Club 1992 Published by the Oriental Bird Club, c/o The Lodge, Sandy, Beds., SG19 2DL, U.K.

